Information
Management

Developing Records Retention and Disposition Schedules

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GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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1.
Introduction

Overview

The Records Management Regulation requires that all records under the control of government organizations be scheduled and that records be scheduled prior to disposition. This publication explains what records retention and disposition scheduling is and provides a detailed guide to the Government of Alberta's approach to scheduling and techniques for developing quality schedules.

Each organization within the Government of Alberta should approach records scheduling in a planned, comprehensive and systematic manner, and in accordance with this guide.

The approach taken is consistent with and supports:

- the principles of the Government of Alberta's Information Management Framework;
- the international ISO 15489 records management standard; and
- the draft ANSI/ARMA guideline "Managing Recorded Information Assets and Resources: Retention and Disposition Program".

Objectives

The key objectives of this chapter are to explain and provide guidance on how to:

- create a records scheduling plan for your organization and update it on a regular basis;
- establish, organize and plan individual scheduling projects;
- collect and analyze the data necessary to properly prepare records retention and disposition schedules;

- where appropriate use government-wide records retention and disposition schedules;
- develop quality comprehensive continuing records retention and disposition schedules and get them approved;
- create one-time retention and disposition schedules;
- manage and amend your records retention and disposition schedules to keep them current and relevant; and
- develop retention and disposition schedules to alienate records from the custody and control of the government.

What is a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

A *records retention and disposition schedule* (also referred to in this publication as a *records schedule* or a *schedule*) is a legal authority that describes the records under the control of a government organization, specifies how long and where they must be kept as they progress through the phases of their life cycle, the format in which the records must be stored and what their final disposition will be (destruction or archival preservation) at the end of their life cycle.

A *records series* (also commonly called an *item* on a schedule) is a group or unit of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit and that can be evaluated as a unit for scheduling purposes. For example, all corporation tax records for Alberta corporations are a records series maintained by Alberta Revenue.

A records retention and disposition schedule includes:

- *descriptive information about the organization*, its programs, services, functions, activities and legislation;
- *descriptive information about each records series*, its use, format, security needs, accessibility, significance to government programs and any legal or freedom of information/protection of privacy references;
- *date ranges* for each records series;
- the business rules associated with *records closure* (file completed or closed, i.e. completion of the active phase) for each records series;

- how long each records series is to be kept in its *active and semi-active* phase in the organization;
- how long each records series is to be kept in its *inactive* phase in the Alberta Records Centre (where applicable); and
- what the *final disposition* will be (e.g. destruction or preservation at the Provincial Archives) for each records series.

Types of Schedules

There are two types of records retention and disposition schedules:

- *Continuing Schedules*

  These should be prepared when you are scheduling:

  - records of an ongoing program, service, function or process;
  - records that are still being created; and
  - records that are active or that have long term value.

Continuing schedules should be used in the vast majority of scheduling projects. The records scheduling methodology described in this publication is primarily intended to help you prepare continuing schedules.

- *One-Time Schedules*

  These should only be prepared when you are scheduling:

  - records of a program, service, function or process that has been discontinued;
  - inactive records that will not be converted to a new records classification structure; and
  - records that are being alienated or transferred outside the custody and control of government.

All one-time records schedules automatically lapse one calendar year after the date on which they were approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee or sixty days after the final disposition is to take place, if the final disposition is more than one calendar year from when the schedule was approved. For more details on preparing one-time schedules, see Chapter 8 of this publication.

Benefits of Records Scheduling

Records scheduling is an important activity. Records schedules and timely records disposition provide the following benefits:

- *Protection of organizational needs*

  - Improved government access to current and active information for executive and management decision-making.

  - Efficient operation of business activities in all areas of government.

  - Improved public access to appropriate information and protection of privacy in line with the conditions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Health Information Act* (where applicable).

  - Improved government access to inactive records of long term value especially records required for program monitoring, statistics or research.

- *Information risk management*

  - Protection of the legal interests of the provincial government by ensuring that retention periods and disposition actions allow for compliance with applicable statutes and regulations.

  - Assurance of the security and confidentiality of records throughout their entire life cycle.

  - Identification and protection of vital records. Vital records are those records necessary to continue government operations during a disaster or emergency.

- *Records cost management*

  - Reduction of costs associated with wasted space, equipment and time spent maintaining unnecessary records.

- *Protection of records of enduring value*

  - Assurance that records of enduring value to the Government and citizens of Alberta are preserved and maintained by the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Protection of Organizational Needs

The primary factor in records scheduling is the requirements of the organization for the information. We must not destroy records that are required to make decisions or that support our activities or transactions.

Keeping records so that the business of government can be conducted efficiently and effectively is the paramount requirement for a records and information management program.

To do this, you need to define when records are no longer required. You need to know the following things:

- What are the purposes and functions that the records fulfill (in order to know if the records are no longer required)?
- What are the specific business rules that determine when a file can be closed?
- Who is responsible for decision-making (to confirm records that are no longer required)?
- What criteria must be applied to the record so that staff can decide whether or not it is still needed?
- How will the closure criteria be documented and communicated?
- How long will the record remain of value after closure?
- What is the best storage location for these records given facilities, equipment and access concerns?

You need to ensure that these decisions are valid, agreed to and documented.

Information Risk Management

The records we keep are vulnerable to many risks. You must protect your organization from unnecessary risks and losses due to:

- litigation;
- statutory or regulatory non-compliance;

- natural or other disasters; and
- criminal activities such as theft or arson.

Information risk management considers the following questions:

- What are the dangers of keeping records too long?
- What are the risks of destroying records too soon?
- What are the risks associated with inaccurate or inadequate indexing or listing of records?
- What are the risks of insecure destruction of information?
- What are the risks of only keeping one copy of a record?
- What are the risks of storing confidential information in insecure storage equipment?
- What are the risks of not being able to locate records requested under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act?*

Accurate schedules can help identify and minimize these risks.

Records Cost Management

More important than the precise cost of maintaining records for an organization is the assessment of the cost to usefulness ratio. For example, in active records systems, if the reference rate for the records series is low, then the value of maintaining expensive labels, costly folders or high priced storage and retrieval equipment is questionable. In inactive systems, if the legal requirement to keep the record has been determined, what is the value or return on investment for keeping the record longer? What benefit does the organization gain?

- *Media Selection*

  If records must be kept for a long period of time, what is the best media for the records taking into account media lifespan, records series reference rates, accessibility of information, security needs, space availability and cost?

- *Space Allocation*

> Space is always a critical problem for businesses and governments. Although staff remains the largest overhead cost for organizations, equipment and space are close behind. The economics of records retention must be a determining factor in records retention scheduling.

The actual costs of keeping records on site (i.e. occupying equipment and space) must be calculated and weighed against off-site storage facility costs. Keep in mind the number of retrievals anticipated and the costs associated with retrieval. Although government organizations are not charged back for off-site storage and retrieval at Alberta Records Centre facilities, there is a cost-saving to the government when inactive records are transferred off-site and when retention periods are minimized.

Protection of Records of Enduring Value

A record's period of greatest use is just after it has been created. Its value to the organization is not completely dependent on that initial high reference rate. A record may be of value long after it has been created.

You must take care to protect your organization's records of enduring value from any loss or damage which could adversely affect the following:

- current program activities;
- future litigation;
- audits;
- investigations; or
- research.

Principles of Records Scheduling

The records scheduling methodology outlined in this publication is based on a series of principles that are compatible with and complementary to the principles and directives of the Government of Alberta's Information Management Framework Summary. The principles are stated here for reference and are reflected in the detailed guidelines that follow.

- All records in the Government of Alberta must be scheduled.

- Records scheduling in the Government of Alberta must comply with and support the administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Health Information Act*.
- Records scheduling should be approached proactively, according to a records scheduling plan and not in an unplanned or reactive way.
- Records scheduling should be approached in a comprehensive manner, scheduling all records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, held by a program or service at the same time rather than on an individual records series basis.
- Records schedules should be revisited when plans are being made to introduce major changes to the program or service, significant legislative changes, new information technologies, electronic information management (EIM) applications, or electronic service delivery.
- Records schedules should be drafted to be implemented on a continuing rather than one-time basis, although it may be necessary to limit the scope of some schedules to deal with special circumstances, such as program closures, unexpected alienations of records or critical space issues.
- Records scheduling and records classification are closely related and should be linked.
- Records scheduling should provide consistent retention periods for records with similar values, not only within your organization but across government and also between governments of other jurisdictions.
- Records scheduling in the Government of Alberta must ensure that government records of enduring historical or research value are preserved for the Government and people of Alberta.
- Records scheduling must assign retention periods based on a formal analysis of records values and consultation with an organization's legal, audit and senior management staff as well as staff from the Information Management Branch, and the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

- Records scheduling must minimize the length of time records are to be kept, subject to the records values identified, in order to reduce storage costs.
- Records scheduling must maximize efficiency in terms of on-site and off-site storage and support Alberta Records Centre operations.
- Records scheduling must maximize efficiency in terms of staff resources while maintaining a controlled process.
- Records scheduling must account for the legal admissibility of records series as evidence where such records may be required for court cases.
- Records scheduling must be documented in a manner that facilitates review and approval by senior management of the business units, the Information Management Branch, the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the Alberta Records Management Committee.
- Records scheduling must be documented in a manner that will be clear to future users as the schedule is implemented and amended over time.
- Records schedules are living documents, which require continuous review and amendment as organizations evolve.

2.

Creating an Organization-Wide Scheduling Plan

Introduction

A key principle of the Government of Alberta's approach to records scheduling is that records should be scheduled proactively, according to a records scheduling plan and not in an unplanned, reactive way. It is important for the scheduling plan to be developed and maintained centrally for an entire organization, preferably by the Senior Records Officer.

The organization-wide records scheduling plan should be undertaken as a component of a broader organization-wide information and records management plan, which in turn should be linked to:

- the business planning process for your organization;
- the plans to maintain the organization's listing of personal information banks required by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
- the Information & Communications Technology Business Plan, required by the Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer.

This chapter explains and provides guidance on:

- how to create an organization-wide scheduling plan;
- how the plan relates to information and records management as well as freedom of information and protection of privacy planning;
- how to get the plan approved; and
- how to implement and update the plan.

Plan Elements

An organization-wide information and records management plan should include a number of elements, such as:

- development, implementation and maintenance of information and records management policy, standards and guidelines;
- establishment of a comprehensive inventory of records to support FOIP and other internal management needs;
- development, implementation and maintenance of records classification and retrieval systems, and records retention and disposition schedules;
- identification and protection of vital records;
- acquisition and implementation of electronic information management (EIM) technology to support information and records management activities; and
- marketing, training and communications.

This chapter will deal with the records scheduling component of the information and records management plan.

Purpose of the Scheduling Plan

The organization-wide records scheduling plan is intended to be a working document that outlines the scope, priority and the timeframes of projects to schedule each organization's records according to the records scheduling methodology. It should assist you in allocating resources over time and as a result, make the scheduling exercise more manageable.

Factors Affecting the Scheduling Plan

Different factors will affect each organization's scheduling plan. These include:

- whether the records management program and systems are centrally controlled by the Senior Records Officer (SRO) or whether control is decentralized to program areas with the SRO playing a facilitative role;
- whether specialized records management resources are available (either existing staff or contracted) to plan, coordinate and undertake scheduling projects or whether program area staff (or contracted resources) will undertake the projects, with the SRO doing the planning and coordination;

- whether records schedules will be developed separately from classification and retrieval systems or whether both will be developed concurrently;
- the size of the organization, its structure and the number of regional, district and field offices it has;
- the importance, public profile and complexity of the business functions of the organization, including the significance of changes being made to the program and service delivery mechanisms;
- whether major changes are occurring in the organization (e.g. changes in legislation, restructuring, outsourcing, privatization, re-engineering, introduction of information technologies, etc.); and
- the need to ensure schedule development activities are balanced with other priority information and records management projects, as resources are allocated in the annual information and records management planning processes.

Senior Records Officers will have to assess these factors before developing the records scheduling plan. Each organization is unique and each records management program and scheduling plan will therefore be different.

Planning Templates

Sample planning templates or forms consists of two parts:

- *Organizational Information Summary* collects summary information about your organization; and
- *Plan Details* identifies the scope of scheduling projects, organizational units responsible, priorities, related existing schedules and target starting and completion dates.

The planning forms included here are examples only. You may customize and redesign these forms and add any additional information you feel is necessary to meet the needs of your organization.

Organization-Wide Records Scheduling Plan
Organizational Information Summary

1. Name of the organization: ____________________________

2. What is the basic mandate and mission of the organization?

3. Provide a brief history of the organization.

4. Identify legislation for which the organization is responsible.

5. Identify each program or service for which the organization is responsible.

6. Describe the current organizational structure (Attach chart).

Approvals

____________________	____________________
Senior Records Officer	Date
____________________	____________________
Executive Manager Responsible for Records and Information Management	Date

ORGANIZATION-WIDE RECORDS SCHEDULING PLAN DETAILS					
Item No.	Program/Service Name	Organization Unit Responsible	Related Existing Schedules	Target Dates	
				Start	Completion

What Data Should Be Collected

In order to develop a records scheduling plan for your organization, the following information should be collected:

- the mission, purpose, mandate and structure of your organization;
- the specific programs and services of your organization, their functions, activities and plans, and the organizational units related to them;
- the Acts and Regulations that govern your organization and its programs and services;
- general information about the records of each program/service; and
- management information about the existing records schedules of your organization.

Sources of Information

The starting point in your data collection is identifying, obtaining and reviewing all relevant sources that may provide information about the structure and programs of your organization. This will help to ensure that your plan is accurate and complete. These sources include:

- your organization's web site(s);
- your organization's annual 3 year business plan, available on the Alberta Finance web site, and required by the *Government Accountability Act;*
- *Queen's Printer Bookstore Catalogue* which lists all Alberta acts and regulations;
- the *Statutes of Alberta* and all associated *Regulations* that pertain specifically to your organization;
- the *Annual Report* that your organization produces (recent and back issues);
- the Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer (Innovation and Science's) SHARP intranet site;

- the *Government of Alberta Telephone Directory* (also known as the RITE Directory) produced by the Public Affairs Bureau;

Many of these publications are available through the government home page, by most government libraries and for purchase through the Queen's Printer Bookstore (Public Affairs Bureau).

There are other documents internal to your organization that will be of considerable use to you in preparing a scheduling plan. These may include:

- program/service operational plans, goals and objectives;
- information systems inventories/catalogues/documentation;
- Government of Alberta Enterprise Architecture (GAEA) information;
- information technology functional and data models
- organization charts;
- policies and procedures manuals; and
- major studies conducted.

You should also contact the Information Management Branch to request a management report related to your existing records schedules available through the Records Scheduling System (RSS);

Steps in Developing Scheduling Plans

After your preliminary data gathering is complete, you can begin to develop your scheduling plan. The development of the scheduling plan consists of the following steps:

- determining a strategy for short-term "quick fix" scheduling options;
- mapping your organization's key programs and to determine the scope of scheduling projects;
- evaluating/ranking programs/services for scheduling purposes; and
- planning the implementation of the scheduling plan.

Determining a Strategy for Short-Term "Quick Fix" Scheduling Options

Review the report obtained through the Records Scheduling System (RSS) from the Information Management Branch. A sample of a type of report custom prepared for the Department of Government Services is illustrated here.

Sample Report

Government Services Schedules

As of March 18, 2004

Approved

1976/111-A2	Land Titles Offices
1977/003	Debtor's Assistance Boards
1977/092	Purged Disciplinary Papers
1977/126	Records Management Branch
1983/094-A1	Vital Statistics
1983/131-A1	Vital Statistics
1984/102-A1	Foreign Ownership of Land Administration
1984/165	Computer System Administrative Statistical Reports (SYSOUTS)
1984/197-A6	PERSONNEL RECORDS SCHEDULE
1985/189	Motor Vehicles Division
1986/050-A011	Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA)
1987/152	Vital Statistics
1988/084	Motor Vehicles Division
1988/095-A2	Corporate Registry
1991/016-A2	Land Titles Offices
1991/053	MOTOR VEHICLES DIVISION
1991/086	Vital Statistics Branch
1992/041	Vital Statistics Branch
1992/048	Land Titles Offices
1992/129	Ministerial Action Requests Cross-Government Schedule (October 1992)
1995/007-A001	TRANSITORY RECORDS
2000/002	Foreign Ownership of Land Administration (FOLA)

Cancelled

1977/026	Personnel
1979/014-A1	Health Services – Rehabilitative Programs
1981/025	Municipal Affairs
1981/083	Consumer Credit
1981/087	Edmonton Regional Office
1981/217	Entire Department - Administration Records
1983/089	Land Titles Offices
1986/050-A10	Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA)
1991/070	Consumer Financial Services
1991/108	Community Services and Professional Standards & Services Division
1995/007	TRANSITORY RECORDS

Deferred (awaiting Secretariat Review)	
2001/030	Corporate Registry
Draft (awaiting Appraisal)	
2001/029	Land Titles
2003/025	Consumer Services - Franchises
Draft (awaiting Signatures)	
2002/041	Minister`s Office
Expired	
1975/117	Office of the Provincial Auditor
1977/115	Consumer Relations Division
1980/169	Companies Branch
1981/045	Records and Licensing
1983/100-A1	Licensing
1985/121-A1	Service Delivery - Client Records
1991/107	Industry Standards
1997/015	Industry Standards
1997/038	Consumer Debt Repayment
New Draft	
2004/018	Personal Property
2004/019	Motor Vehicles
2004/027	Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council
2004/028	Consumer Debt Repayment Program
Preliminary Draft	
2001/119	Vital Statistics
2001/120	Government Services – General
2003/008	Consumer Services
2003/026	Information Technology
2003/043	Backup Systems and Medias
2004/026	Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board
Waiting for Cancel	
1982/103	All Divisions and Branches
Withdrawn	
1986/050	Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA)

Assess the report prepared for your organization to determine if there are any short-term solutions to:

- combine schedules;
- complete minor amendments to deal with urgent situations; and or
- cancel obsolete/defunct schedules.

For example from the Government Services example, there may be opportunity to combine a number of schedules related to Vital Statistics to make scheduling more efficient.

Discuss any proposed strategies with the Information Management Branch to determine the feasibility.

Determining Scope of Scheduling Projects

The next step in the development of the scheduling plan is to map the organization's key programs and to determine the scope of the associated scheduling projects. For most government organizations, scheduling by program or service will be the most logical way to achieve the principle of comprehensive schedules. The natural tendency may be to equate program and services with organizational units (eg. divisions, branches, etc.). Scheduling by organizational unit is, however, generally not recommended because organizational structures are so subject to change.

Identifying programs and services will require extensive research and consultation with organizational staff. There is no standard definition of a program or service. Business plans, mission statements and other documents must be reviewed and key program managers interviewed. Each organization will end up with its own unique breakdown of programs or services. For example, for Alberta Government Services, the map might include:

- Information and Records Management
- Access and Privacy
- Consumer Protection
- Service Alberta
- Land Titles Registry

- Motor Vehicle Registry
- Personal Property Registry
- Vital Statistics
- Corporate Registry
- Registry Agent Administration

Once you have made a draft of your organization's programs and services, review the organizational structure to determine which organizational unit is responsible for which program or service and where the decision-making responsibility lies. You will likely have to contact someone within the program or service areas to verify your information and to make sure that you have not missed any programs or services. Be sure to account for programs or services that have been recently discontinued, privatized or outsourced. There may still be records pertaining to those programs and services that will have to be scheduled, either for storage and disposition, or for alienation into the custody and control of a non-government organization.

Once your list of programs and services has been finalized, you can then proceed to evaluate and rank the scheduling projects in the order they will proceed.

You may wish to start with "quick fix" projects and then create an analysis worksheet for each program or service you identify. This will assist in completing the remaining steps. A sample form and instructions for completing it are provided on the following pages.

Organizations may choose to undertake scheduling projects in different ways. Senior Records Officers should remember that the key principle is to develop comprehensive schedules. It would be perfectly acceptable, for example, for a small agency with 2 or 3 programs to develop one schedule for all of their operational records. Similarly, if an organization is developing an integrated organization-wide operational records classification structure all at one time, they may choose to submit one schedule that covers all operational records in the organization.

On the other hand, large organizations with many programs will likely have several operational schedules (ie. one for each program). Whatever approach makes the most sense to your organization and that fits within the principle of comprehensiveness is the one that you should follow.

The other consideration is the ease of review and update. Program level versus organizational level will likely be easier to deal with.

Program/Service Analysis

1. Name of the Program/Service: ______________________________

2. What are the Main Functions and Activities of the Program/Service?

3. What is the Name of the Organization Unit(s) Responsible for the Program/Service

4. Where are the Records Physically Located?

5. Are there any electronic records or web sites? If so, where are they located?

6. Identify any Existing Records Schedules for the Program/Service.

Complexity Code	**Importance Code**
Work Required	**Priority Code**
Start Date	**End Date**

Evaluating and Ranking Scheduling Projects

The next step is to evaluate the complexity of the activities of each program or service. Factors may include:

- number of employees;
- number of physical locations including contracted agencies or delegate administrative organizations;
- volume and complexity of automated information systems;
- number and complexity (static or transactions) of web sites;
- electronic records stored on shared drives and personal drives;
- the use of an electronic information management or electronic recordkeeping system;
- variety of media used to store information;
- the cooperativeness of the management and staff;
- stability of the program (is it being restructured or eliminated?); and
- the familiarity of schedule development staff with the program's operation

You may wish to use a coding system to rank these

1 = very complex

2 = somewhat complex

3 = average

4 = simple

Next, evaluate the importance of developing a schedule for each program or service by defining:

- the currency of existing schedules (ie. how long ago they were developed)

- the current volume and annual growth rate of the records. This will identify areas where scheduling and disposition could result in considerable savings;
- the replacement cost of the records, especially maps, plans, photographs, etc. (costly to create or reproduce);
- the volume of requests that have been received and are likely to be received under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- if the program has significant personal information banks;
- any potential research/archival value of some of the records (consult with the Provincial Archives if required);
- the public impact of the program or service; and
- the potential for use of the records to support litigation.

You may wish to use a coding system to rank these:

1 = very important

2 = important

3 = average

4 = not very important

Then, establish a priority for each program or service. You may wish to use a coding system to rank these:

1 = high

2 = medium

3 = low

You may have to balance the importance and complexity factors, selecting very important and not very complex programs or services to start with.

Estimating the Project Timeframes

Next, estimate the number of days of work required to develop a schedule for the program/service, based on the volume and nature of the records.

Then, estimate the target start and completion dates for each scheduling project. A consultation process with specific organizational units administering these programs/services will be required to complete the plan accurately and realistically.

Getting the Scheduling Plan Approved

When you have completed the scheduling plan, it should be formally approved within your organization preferably at the executive level. This will ensure commitment and compliance by program managers throughout the organization.

The scheduling plan should be signed by:

- the Senior Records Officer;
- the Executive Officer (Assistant Deputy Minister, Vice President, etc.) functionally responsible for records and information management (This individual will sponsor the plan before the executive committee).

Implementing, Monitoring and Updating the Scheduling Plan

Implementation Factors

Once your organization has approved the scheduling plan, you can begin to implement it. How you do this will depend on a number of factors.

These factors include:

- the number and quality of resources available in your organization's records management program (i.e. qualified/trained staff, contract funds);
- the nature of your organization's records management or Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy program (i.e. centralized or decentralized, centrally controlled or end-user driven, etc.); and

- the number, complexity and importance of your organization's programs and services.

Implementation Planning

In many government organizations, the Senior Records Officer may not have enough qualified staff or financial resources to be able to do all of the scheduling projects. Therefore, the SRO may need to find creative ways to accomplish all of the scheduling projects within a reasonable timeframe.

There are two general approaches to implementation, a centralized approach and a decentralized approach.

Centralized Approach

Under a centralized approach, the Senior Records Officer is accountable for establishing the project teams to conduct scheduling projects. The Senior Records Officer may utilize the resources of ACSC, may hire records management consultants to lead or to assist the project teams or may comprise the teams completely of his/her staff or temporary or seconded staff. This approach will only be feasible where resources permit.

Decentralized Approach

Under a decentralized approach, Senior Program Managers are responsible for scheduling the records of their program or service. This approach may be necessary in some organizations. Senior Program Managers would assign a knowledgeable and qualified person to conduct the scheduling project for their program/service.

The Senior Program Manager might also choose to hire a records management consultant or use a member of his/her own staff who has completed the training sessions offered by Information Management Branch. The Senior Program Manager should work in conjunction with the Senior Records Officer and inform the SRO of the start and completion of the project. The Senior Records Officer needs to know which programs/services are conducting scheduling projects in order to ensure that resources, if required, are available. Ultimately, it will be the Senior Records Officer who signs the schedules and submits them to the Alberta Records Management Committee.

Central Co-ordination

Even with the decentralized approach, there must be some central coordination, preferably by the Senior Records Officer, in order to maintain standards, consistency and overall accountability.

Monitoring and Updating the Plan

As your scheduling plan is intended to be a working document, it should be continually monitored and updated as:

- records schedules are completed;
- your organizational structure, mandates, legislation, etc. changes;
- you review/revise your target start/completion dates; and
- you reallocate priorities based on changed circumstances.

3.
Planning Scheduling Projects

Introduction

A planned approach to records scheduling in each government organization will ensure that resources are coordinated and that the schedules produced are comprehensive and accurate. This chapter explains and provides guidance on how to initiate, organize and plan individual records scheduling projects.

Initiating the Project

The senior program manager is the senior manager responsible for the program or service area you are scheduling. Regardless of how you approach a scheduling project, it is essential to set up a meeting to obtain the support and approval of the senior program manager before you begin. For this meeting, we recommend that you prepare a project proposal, to present to the senior program manager.

Project Proposal

The project proposal is a document that outlines in general terms:

- the steps involved in the scheduling project;
- the projected time frames and resources required of the program and its staff; and
- the outcomes that can be expected.

It is intended as a discussion guide for the project initiation meeting and should give the senior program manager enough information to approve the initiation of the project. The project proposal will form the basis of the terms of reference.

Project Initiation Meeting

In the project initiation meeting, you may present the project proposal to the senior program manager, elaborating briefly on each step, the projected time frames and resource requirements of the program and its staff, and the expected outcomes. Also, you will likely be required to answer questions that the senior program manager may have and to verify that the information collected in the development of the organization-wide scheduling plan is accurate and up-to-date.

At this meeting, you may also wish to ask the senior program manager if there are records under the control of government that are maintained by contracted agencies or delegated administrative organizations. If so, request that steps be made to include these records in the scope of the scheduling project.

Once the senior program manager has signed off the project proposal and approved the initiation of the project, it is helpful if the senior program manager communicates this approval to staff. It is also a good idea to set up the user orientation sessions referred to in this section at this time.

Conducting User Orientation Sessions

Before beginning any substantial work on the project, you should hold user orientation sessions. The purpose is to inform users of the impact of the project on them. You can usually identify the staff affected from the information gathered to develop the terms of reference. To avoid disruption, try to combine the user orientation with scheduled staff meetings.

The objectives of the user orientation sessions are to provide the users with an understanding of the project and the activities you will be undertaking. Ensure that the users:

- understand the importance of the project;
- understand that there will be disruptions occurring during the project;
- feel comfortable with the plan and the expertise of the team; and
- are committed to participating.

Prepare an agenda for the sessions covering the key points. These may include:

- the general scope of the project;
- the reasons for doing the project;
- how they will benefit from the project;
- how the work to be done will affect the users (i.e. be honest about the disruptions) and approximately when it will happen;

- what they will be expected to do;
- when regular status reports will be available; and
- who they should talk to if concerns arise.

Arranging Sessions

You may be able to conduct the user orientation sessions in groups or individually, depending on the number and location of staff involved. Sessions should be scheduled to minimize inconvenience to staff. Coordinate the sessions with the senior program manager and any line managers responsible for the staff.

Conducting Sessions

The meetings should be brief and informal. The level of detail provided should depend on how much the project will affect the staff. Ask for and answer any questions staff may have.

Depending on the size of the project, a separate user orientation meeting may not be necessary. For smaller projects, a memo from the senior program manager may be sufficient or the orientation could be an item on the agenda of a staff meeting. The important focus of the session is the message you want to convey not the format of the session.

Conducting the Preliminary Review

Purpose of the Preliminary Review

Once you have obtained approval to initiate the project, you should conduct a preliminary review of the program/service and its records. This will assist you in assessing the scope of the scheduling project. It will help you to identify at a high level, the records series you will be dealing with, the media of the records and the technologies used to maintain them, and the resource people that will be required for your project team. It is a necessary preliminary step to preparing the project terms of reference.

Preliminary Data Gathering and Review

Much of this information may already be included in the data collected for your organization's records scheduling plan. Because of the rapid changes being made in the government, you should review and verify this data. Changes may have occurred in staff, the program or service, or in the organizational structure.

Written Information

Review written information about the organization and the particular program or service. This includes any pertinent legislation, annual reports, organizational charts, business plans, mission statements, goals and objectives, publications, etc. Program or service managers, as well as key or long time staff members, can provide you with this information.

General Review of Records

It is a good idea to conduct a general review of the records associated with the program or service and to note their location. Include all media types including electronic media in the review and ensure that you visit all applicable storage areas, (e.g. basements, attics, vaults, etc.) as well as file rooms or offices where records are stored. With electronic records, be sure to include shared drives, personal drives, electronic information management or electronic recordkeeping systems and web sites (Internet, intranet, and extranet sites). You probably will want to have a program contact with you or a contact for each major section or group of files.

The general review of records should occur at the convenience of the staff using or managing the records. It can be done as a separate activity or combined with the records series inventory, depending on the complexity of the project. At a minimum, what you want to know at this point is:

- where records are being stored;
- what the records media are;
- whether there are any information security risks; and
- the volume of records being stored.

For details on the records series inventory process, see Chapter 4 of this publication.

Floor Plan

When you reach the records series inventory phase of the project, it is important that you know where all the records are located. For your schedules to be effective they must include all records, regardless of media.

To accomplish this, you may wish to either obtain a floor plan from your facilities or accommodation group or to draft a floor plan yourself. On the plan, indicate the location and type of storage equipment used to house records. Use codes to identify the storage equipment.

For example:

- L is for lateral file cabinets;
- C for conventional (or horizontal) file cabinets;
- B for bookcases;
- S for shelving;
- M for microfilm storage cabinets;
- F for network file server;

The different types of storage equipment would then each be consecutively numbered. (eg. L1, L2, C1, C2 etc.).

Designate a starting point on your chart and number the cabinets or other storage equipment in a clockwise order if possible. If records are maintained in individual offices, these too must be marked.

These numbers will provide you with a visual index to your records series inventories.

Transitory Records

Identify any obvious transitory records such as blank information media, duplicate documents, publications, software manuals, and advertising materials. Some draft documents and working materials may also be classified as transitory records. These records should not be inventoried. For further details on the identification of transitory records, see the section Transitory Records Schedules in Chapter 6 of this publication.

Records from Defunct Programs/Services

Identify the location and volume of any stored records from discontinued programs, services and functions, and from former staff, that are no longer being created and used.

You will not include them in the continuing schedule you prepare for the program/service. Instead you should develop a one-time records schedule to dispose of them. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 8 of this publication.

Staff

You need to identify all of the staff involved in the program or service because they all create, use and possibly maintain records. Note the personnel who are key to the records management process. They may be involved with records creation, classification or filing. Note any others who are directly affected by the project. Identify the managers, senior supervisory, professional and technical staff of the program or service.

Developing the Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Terms of Reference

The preliminary review will give you the data you need to develop the project terms of reference. The terms of reference provides the mandate for the project. It describes what needs to be done, by whom, with what resources, and by when. The degree of detail required in a terms of reference will depend on the scope of the project. Larger projects require more detail; smaller projects will require less detail. Typical elements include:

Terms of Reference Elements

- *Introduction*

  What is the background that led to this project proposal? What is the problem or need that will be addressed?

- *Purpose and objectives of the project*

  What is the main reason this project should exist? For what purpose? What will be the end result or outcome of the project?

- *Scope of the project*

  What are the parameters of the project? What will it address? What will it not address? What effect will the project have on existing activities and staff in the program or function?

- *Project client and reporting*

Who is the primary project client (the individual responsible for its ultimate approval)? Who else will be involved in reviewing accomplishments? Who else will be informed of project progress?

- *Project organization*

How will the project be organized? What will be the roles and responsibilities of all the people involved:

- the people who will review and approve outputs;
- the project coordinator;
- line managers and program representatives affected by the project;
- people who will use or be affected by the results of the project.

For further details about who should be involved in the project team, see the section on Forming the Project Team (Chapter 3).

Depending on the complexity of the project, you may need to attach a project organization chart and role descriptions of individuals and committees who will develop, review, approve, and implement the project.

- *Resources required*

What human resources (eg. expertise, types of positions, etc.) and other resources such as financial funding will be required by the project? Where will these resources come from?

- *Project time frames*

When will the project start? When will it end?

- *Project accomplishments or milestones*

What are the major milestones (major accomplishments or critical decision points) as the project progresses? What concrete and measurable criteria or products will be used to assess progress toward project objectives? How will managers be able to monitor the project?

- *Project cost estimates*

  What will the entire cost of the project be, including staff, materials, facilities and services if contracted resources are used? Are there any funding issues or implications that the program manager should be aware of?

- *Project interfaces*

  What existing projects and initiatives within the program or function will affect or be affected by this project?

- *Project communications*

  Who will be informed of what, how, how often, and when? What communications and reporting processes will happen:

  - between the project coordinator, senior program manager, and other managers;

  - between the project and its end users, as appropriate,

  - between the project and senior management?

- *Preliminary work plan*

  In general terms when will milestones, accomplishments and critical decisions occur? (Relate these to major project milestones listed earlier in the terms of reference). Who is responsible for seeing that major tasks are accomplished? (You will probably want to put this information in chart form).

- *Project approvals*

  Who is responsible for what approvals? The terms of reference should include an agreement/approval clause and the signatures and sign offs of individuals responsible for the project (the senior program manager and the project coordinator).

Management Approval

After you have developed the terms of reference, submit it to the senior program manager for review. If after reviewing the terms of reference the senior program manager requests any changes, incorporate them and present the revised terms of reference to the senior program manager for formal approval.

Forming the Project Team

Project Team

While you are conducting the preliminary review and developing the terms of reference, you should start to form the project team. Often this will be integral to the establishment of the terms of reference. The scope of the project can help determine the type and number of project team members and resource persons you will need.

Selecting your project team and other resources is an important issue. You must decide how many people should belong, the skills and knowledge required and the levels of the organization you should draw from. You may also wish to use external advisors.

Team Structure

Staff needed for the project may participate at various stages. All staff do not have to attend every meeting of the group. Resource persons will attend as their expertise is required. Contact each person initially to discuss the need for their expertise, the estimated amount of time they will need to commit to the project (number of meetings anticipated, research required, etc.), and the nature and value of the scheduling project itself.

The following personnel should be on the project team.

- *Project Client*

  The sponsor of the project is normally the senior program manager. Project clients do not generally participate directly in the project on a daily basis but they must communicate their support and the priority of the project to their staff. They must also be advised of the progress of the project on a regular basis and be involved when decisions are being made.

- *Project Coordinator*

  The project coordinator will be responsible for managing the project on a daily basis. There are three options for the selection of the project coordinator.

  - Under the centralized approach, this individual will be a records management specialist trained in the scheduling methodology being used and reporting to the Senior Records Officer (SRO). The project coordinator may actually be the SRO. The project coordinator may also be a consultant who is a records management specialist contracted by the SRO.

- Alternatively, this project coordinator may be a consultant who is a records management specialist contracted to complete the project by the project client and who has been trained in the scheduling methodology being used.

Regardless of the option followed, this person must be able to work independently, do complex research, communicate well both verbally and in writing, and direct and coordinate the workings of a group.

- *Users*

  These are important members of your project team. They may be support staff, professional/technical staff, or line managers. They have the best knowledge of the nature and use of the records, and their value. Be careful to select staff who are knowledgeable, and able to work in a group setting.

- *Information Technology Representatives*

  If the information systems or electronic information management (EIM) systems in use or being considered in the program or service are large and complex, then systems staff should be on the project team. Otherwise, they would be resource persons. Included may be systems analysts, business analysts, programmers, web masters, and database administrators. Other Information Technology staff may be involved as a resource persons as noted below.

Internal Resource Persons

The following personnel from within your organization may serve as resource persons. They are listed as though they perform one specific function. In smaller organizations, one person may be responsible for several functions.

- *Senior Records Officer (SRO)*

  If the project coordinator is not the SRO, then the SRO should be a resource person. Other persons with records management experience may be needed to assist with large projects.

- *Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) Coordinator*

  The FOIP Coordinator can provide information on the access and privacy considerations for particular records series. FOIP Coordinators are also responsible on an ongoing basis for the identification of personal information banks for their organization's *Directory of Personal Information Banks*. Therefore, you should liaise with them during scheduling projects.

- *Data Administrator (if any)*

  The information architecture of the organization is closely related to the development of records classification structures and records schedules. The data administrator is the individual who is responsible for organizing and maintaining the information architecture and should be consulted during the development of all program or function schedules.

- *Imaging Specialist (if any)*

  Programs being scheduled may include optical and micrographic systems. The project may require a technical expert to provide information on media transfer capabilities, lifespan of the media, legal acceptability and special storage requirements.

- *Web Master (if any)*

  Government organizations continue to use the World Wide Web as a vehicle to gather and disseminate information. With this media, the information must be identified and organized so that it can be managed and security considerations be placed on the information. The web master is the individual who is responsible for maintaining the web sites and its content, and should be consulted during the development of schedules.

- *Forms Specialist (if any)*

  A large percentage of records in many programs are forms. A forms expert may provide information regarding copy designations, forms use, web-based forms, and paper life expectancy (weight, composition, etc.).

- *Financial Officer*

  A financial officer should review records schedules for programs that have a financial component or are cost-shared with another level of government. The financial officer will ensure all organizational financial responsibilities are addressed.

- *Accommodation Planner*

  Where office space is a major concern of users, consult your organization's accommodation planner. Their skills, knowledge of current programs, and awareness of space issues can assist in determining what sort of storage is feasible or preferred. This allows for more precise decisions to be made for active retention periods.

- *Internal Auditors*

  Some organizations have internal auditors, who are familiar with the specific program and can provide valuable information.

External Resource Persons

Finally there are other personnel from outside of your organization you may wish to use as a resource for their particular expertise but who do not need to be on the project team. Keep in mind that you may need to set up appointments with these individuals. Usually only one or two sessions may be needed to get their input about the specific program. If you are using external consultants, you may have some contract issues that have to be dealt with before you can get their input.

- *Information Management Branch (Alberta Government Services)*

  The Information Management Branch has staff members experienced in schedule development. By the nature of their work, they may be familiar with government schedules that may be similar to the one that you are developing.

- *Provincial Archives of Alberta (Community Development)*

  The designated Government Records Archivist from the Provincial Archives is available to provide assistance with identifying the values of records and determining the appropriate final disposition for the records. Their input may affect the structure of the schedule.

- *Alberta Records Centre (Alberta Corporate Service Centre)*

  The Manager of the Alberta Records Centre (ARC) can provide advice on the requirements for transfer and storage of records to the ARC and their retrieval. Storage requirements may affect how retention periods are assigned within a records series.

- *Legal Advisor*

  As the SRO is accountable for ensuring schedules meet all legal requirements, you may need to have your organization's legal advisor (internal legal counsel or Department of Justice staff) review draft records schedules to ensure that all legal aspects of records retention are addressed. Legal aspects include, for example, ensuring that retention periods meet legal obligations and that the storage media meets court admissibility requirements of evidence. Some organizations routinely submit draft schedules to their legal advisor for review. You will have to assess whether or not your organization needs to do this. It may not be necessary in all cases but is necessary for complex programs affecting citizens and having multi-jurisdictional implications.

- *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development*

  If the program or service being scheduled has an impact or potential impact on the Aboriginal peoples of Alberta or their treaty rights, Aboriginal Affairs should be consulted. For further information, contact the Senior Records Officer for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

- *Other Senior Records Officers*

  If the program crosses over several other organizations, Senior Records Officers and/or program staff from those organizations may have to be involved.

Project Workplan

Once a tentative project team and resource persons have been identified, the workplan for the activities should be prepared. The workplan should then be agreed to by the project coordinator and the senior program manager.

Workplan Contents

The project workplan should include:

- the specific tasks and who is responsible for completing them;
- the extent of user and other project team member and resource person involvement;
- the approximate time required and the completion date for each task and the project; and
- reporting requirements.

Generally, a one or two page workplan is all that is needed.

Workplan Objectives

The objective is to make sure that everyone involved understands their role, the lines of communication and the time frames. After the project workplan has been agreed to, the project team members should be provided with a copy, so that they can keep their commitment to the project.

4.

Collecting Schedule Data

Introduction

To develop effective schedules you need to collect accurate and relevant data. This chapter provides guidance on identifying what type of information is required, developing the means for its collection and collecting the information. You must consider all aspects of the life cycle of records. How are the records created, received, used, retrieved, referenced, maintained, closed and ultimately disposed of?

What Data Must Be Collected

There are two basic groups of information required for a records retention and disposition schedule:

- *Program or Service Information*

  - Purpose/Functions

  - Brief History

  - Mandate/Legal Authority

- *Records Series Documentation*

  - Records Series/Titles/Descriptions

  - Date Ranges of Records Series

  - Media

  - Legal References

  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) References

  - Closure Criteria

  - Retention Periods

  - Concurrence Conditions

  - Final Disposition

This chapter is an introduction to the data collection process, specifically what data you must collect and how you should document your findings using data collection forms and other means. It also deals with the three main categories of schedule data collection:

- Researching Programs/Services;
- Conducting Records Series Inventories; and
- Interviewing Program/Service Staff.

Data Collection Tools

You will be gathering a large amount of information during the data collection stage. You may wish to consider developing and using data collection tools (forms, questionnaires, etc.) to help you keep your findings organized and in a standard format. The data collection tool should be a summary of the general information required for the development of the schedule. You can attach the detailed information you gather to the data collection tool. Before you begin data collection, decide what data collection tools you are going to use and then develop them. Data collection tools can be either paper or electronic formats.

Sample Forms/Formats

Blank sample data collection forms are provided on the following pages. *These are not required forms.* You may modify them to suit your own needs, develop your own forms or use free form documentation. The choice you make should depend on the project requirements and team preferences.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be used during the data collection process:

- as a guide when interviewing key program staff; or
- as a means of collecting general information about the program or service, its functions and activities and its records series.

Project Records

It is also important for the project team to keep accurate and well organized project records. The data collected on forms, questionnaires, notes, etc. along with the terms of reference and workplan constitute the documentation of the scheduling project. Accurate and complete project records will assist you if questions arise during the schedule approval process or when you need to amend the schedule in the future.

FIGURE 4: Sample Forms/Formats

Alberta **Records Schedule Analysis**

Date ____________

Programs/Service Identification

Program/Service Name:

Major Functions/Activities:

Describe the functions/activities/scope/organization of the program/service and briefly explain its plans and objectives: (Attach organization chart)

Date Program/Service Commenced:	Date(s) of Major Program/Service Changes:	Date Program Terminated or will Terminate:

Legislation Governing Program/Service (Specify Act or Regulation Name & Number, Section):

Describe Origins of Program/Service:

Describe Major Program/Service Changes:

Describe interrelationships, partnerships with other government jurisdictions, Alberta Government organizations, local governments, non-government organizations, etc.:

Organizational Identification

Senior Program Manager Name	Senior Program Manager Title	Senior Program Manager Telephone No.

Division Name	Branch Name

Alberta **Web Content Analysis**

Date ________________

Web Site Address:

Type of web site Internet, Intranet or Extranet?

Describe the functions/activities/scope/organization of the web site:

Name of the Web Content Management software:

Name of the web service provider:

Describe interrelationships, partnerships with other government jurisdictions, Alberta Government organizations, local governments, non-government organizations, etc.:

Web Site Content Details

Name of Programs and Service areas represented on web site	Type of site? Information only, Transactional?	Information Published elsewhere?	Date Commenced

Organizational Identification

Web Master Name	Web Master Title	Telephone No.

Division Name	Branch Name

Alberta

Records Series - Inventory

Division Name	Branch/Section Name	Program/Service Name
Program/Service Contact Name/ Telephone No.	Location of Records	Date

Storage Equipment No.	Date of Oldest Records	Date of Most Recent Records	Content: Subject matter, major document types	Case (C) or Subject (S)	Master (M) or Copy (C)	Media	Active (A) or Inactive (I)	Volume (Cu. Ft.)	
								Admin	Oper.
Remarks: Type of Classification/Indexing System in Use, Equipment used, Activity Characteristics, etc. Attach additional sheets if necessary.							Total Volume		

Researching Programs and Services

You cannot properly schedule the records of a program or service without understanding the business it is in. You should research:

- why the program or service was set up;
- who are its clients or customers;
- under what authority it was established;
- who delivers the program or service (if not the organization itself);
- what it does;
- how the service is delivered (on-line, counter, etc.);
- what its goals and plans are;
- what its interrelationships and partnerships are with other governments, organizations, etc.; and
- in general terms initially, the types of records and information it creates, receives and uses.

Without this kind of research, the schedules you produce may not be accurate and effective.

This section explains how to:

- conduct background research into a program or service;
- conduct preliminary legal research into a program or service; and
- review the existing records schedules, records classification structures and information systems of a program or service.

Background Research

You need to develop a sound understanding of the program or service for which you are developing a schedule. This information must be clearly summarized on the records schedule.

General background information should have been gathered for your organization's records scheduling plan or when developing the terms of reference for the project. Review the scheduling plan and project terms of reference to determine this. Then, verify the information gathered and determine what further details are required to complete the schedule. Use the *Records Schedule Analysis Format.*

Program or Service Information

If the project coordinator is a program staff member, there will not be a need to conduct as much formal research. However, the project coordinator must be able to answer the following questions, either from direct experience or from research:

What business is this program or service in? What are its plans or objectives? What is its purpose?

Examine your organization's web site(s) as well as business plans, mission statements, goals and objectives, policy directives, annual reports and program brochures (usually aimed at the general public) to obtain this information.

What is the origin of the program or service? When did it begin? Was it inherited from another organization? What need did it respond to (if known)?

This can help you understand the importance and possible historical significance of the program or service.

How is the program or service organized?

Organization charts are the main source of this information, provided they are up to date. Has the organization changed over time? Is it continuing to change? Is there a scheduled termination or "sunset" date for the program? You may need to review past annual reports or historical organizational charts to understand how the program/service evolved to its current structure and to understand the nature of older records.

Knowing the organizational structure and context for the organizational unit administering the program or service helps you to understand the activities performed.

What are the major functions and activities of this program or service? What jobs do staff perform?

This information may be available from annual and other major reports, strategic and operational plans, electronic systems inventories, business models, etc. If the processes or work flows have been studied and documented, review them. This should give you an idea of the current, completed and future activities of the program. You will also understand how the records are created and used, and when they become inactive.

What is the scope of the program or service?

Is the program or service centralized or decentralized? Does the program or service interact with any other government, e.g. federal, provincial or municipal? What private sector businesses, agencies or individuals are supported by or interact with this program or service? Is the service delivered by another group or agency? Who are its clients?

Does the program or service use a web site to disseminate or gather information?

Is the web site managed by the organization or does another government organization manage the web site, i.e. Service Alberta? Is there an intranet, internet and/or extranet? Who are its clients? How is the web content managed? Is this an informational web site only, or does it have the facility for individuals to request some sort of services? Is there a database application attached to the web site?

Conducting Legal Research

Preliminary Legal Research

Legal research is required to identify the legal mandate of programs/services, any retention or disposition requirements stated in the legislation that affect program/service records or the media that records must be kept in for legal purposes.

The authority for government organizations to establish and provide programs or services may come from statutes or regulations passed by the Alberta Legislature. The legal mandate of each department is generally created by a schedule of the *Government Organization Act*. Often the mandate for a variety of the department programs is contained in these schedules.

In some cases, the mandate for other government organizations or specific programs are established by their own specific statute or regulation (e.g. *Child Welfare Act*). There may be records retention or final disposition statements contained within such acts or regulations

The legislation may specify retention periods for records for businesses and government organizations alike. When government is providing a monitoring or regulatory role, the retention period for business records may be critical in determining the retention period for related government records.

Legislation

The program contacts generally will have copies of relevant legislation and regulations. Senior Records Officers (SROs) should maintain a current copy of all legislation that pertains to their organization, in paper or electronic form. In addition, they should maintain copies of the following acts as they are of value in assessing the legal value of records. The Statutes of Alberta are available on-line from the Queen's Printer Bookstore.

- *Limitations Act* (R.S.A. 2000, Chapter L-12);

  This specifies a variety of time (limitation) periods beyond which a legal action (suit) cannot take place. For example, medical malpractice suits cannot be commenced against a physician more than one year after the professional services complained about were completed. These limitations can affect how long certain types of records must be retained. No federal statute of limitations exists in Canada.

- *Canada Evidence Act* (R.S.C., 1985, Chapter C-5);

  This describes what can be used in a federal or higher court as recorded evidence of an activity or action.

- *Alberta Evidence Act (R.S.A. 2000, Chapter A-18)*;

  This describes what can be used in a provincial or municipal court as recorded evidence of an activity or action. The *Canada Evidence Act* and *Alberta Evidence Act* are important if records series are likely to be used in court proceedings.

Orders-In-Council, Ministerial Orders and Agreements

Other legal documents that may affect records retention and disposition include Orders-In-Council, Ministerial Orders, contracts, federal-provincial agreements, and provincial-municipal agreements.

Documenting Legal Research

When collecting data, document the applicable legislation on the "Records Schedule Analysis" form by:

- identifying the source act, regulation or directive name and number, including section and subsection (if applicable); and

- describing the substance of the legislative requirement for records keeping.

Keep copies of the applicable portion of the legislation or directive with your data collection information.

Further details on documenting legal citations and assessing the legal value of records can be found in Chapter 7 of this publication.

Reviewing Existing Records and Information Systems

Existing Records and Information Systems

An important part of data gathering is the collection and review of documentation on existing records and information systems. The information in:

- records schedules;
- records classification structures or file lists; and
- systems documentation (including document management and electronic mail processes)

will be relevant to the current scheduling project. As well, you will eventually need to identify which schedules are or will be outdated, so they can be cancelled.

Existing Program/Service Schedules

Determine what (if any) schedules were created for the program or service in the past. One-time or continuing schedules may have been developed. Examine copies of approved records schedules kept by the Senior Records Officer.

If you are unable to identify or get a copy of all the schedules that may have been developed for this program or service, contact the Information Management Branch. IMB has developed a system that manages records schedules and the data recorded on them. SROs can produce a list of schedules for their organization from the Records Schedule System (RSS).

Other Organizations

RSS can also assist you in identifying schedules that are similar to the one you are developing. For example, if you are scheduling inspection records, you can inquire on other schedules that include inspection records.

Look for similar schedules within your organization and other organizations. For example, in the Department of Environment, Water Quality records may be comparable in nature and retention to Air Quality records.

Other Jurisdictions

You may also wish to contact equivalent organizations in other jurisdictions to see how they have scheduled similar records series. This might be useful in providing justification of retention periods and final disposition, to the Alberta Records Management Committee. IMB can provide you with contacts in other jurisdictions.

Determine Existing Schedule Status/ Relevance

Identify information on existing schedules that is relevant to the current scheduling project. Review all existing schedules summarized on your data collection form.

The records descriptions, retention periods, final disposition and even the background research used in existing schedules may be of value in your current project. However, the relevance of old schedules may be limited because of the major organizational changes that have occurred in government or major legislative changes that have affected the program.

Terminology changes over time and although some of the entries can still be valid much of the information may no longer be useful. Check each description carefully. There may be records series currently being created that are not accounted for in existing records schedules. Use the information from existing records schedules carefully.

View the retention periods in previous schedules with caution. There may now be reasons why the retention periods should be changed. For example, the impact of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation needs to be considered. However, existing retention periods can be valuable as a starting point when assigning retention periods later, as long as you can validate the rationale.

Identify which existing schedules cover records series currently being created. Then note the relevance of these schedules to the drafting of the current records schedule.

File Lists

Also, collect and review existing records classification structure manuals (or file lists) where they exist. They will help you to identify the records series that exist in the program or service area.

Ideally, government organizations should have a comprehensive records classification structure for their organization. This structure is generally comprised of two sections: administrative records and operational records. This structure specifies a framework for arranging the organization's records logically by subject or function. A file list or subject index is generally maintained or can be generated through EIM applications.

Systems Documentation

Obtain or make a list of all the computer application systems used in the program or service and obtain the system documentation for each application, where it is available. You may have obtained the system documentation during the initial preliminary review. If not, you should contact your information technology area for a copy.

The system documentation typically describes the functions of the application, file layouts, data captured and stored in the files, reports produced, screen layouts, the users of the system, who gets the information (reports or extract files), backup and recovery routines, etc. Depending on the size and complexity of the application, there may be more than one manual. For example, an application could have a system manual which describes the technical aspects of the hardware and software, a user manual which provides instructions to the user on how to use the application and an administrator/operator manual which describes the high level functions of the system such as backup and recovery. You will probably need all the manuals to ensure you have all the available information on the application system.

System documentation is often out of date. Determine the accuracy of the documentation with the systems specialist and get updates, if possible.

Electronic Information Management (EIM)

You will need to identify the electronic information management (EIM) systems that are used in your organization. You will also need to gather information on the software, operating systems and network administration procedures that are used for these systems. Network administration procedures should identify the backup routines done on each system and where the information is stored on the network. Some organizations have established policies and procedures on how these systems are to be used, how documents are to be created and how they are to be stored. If available, obtain a copy of these policies, procedures and guidelines.

Shared Drives Sub-directory Listing

Organizations that do not have an electronic information management system may have organized a LAN drive to be shareable between staff members to share electronic documents. These shared drives are usually organized into sub-directories that resemble the existing records classification structure. Obtaining a listing of the sub-directory structure will help you to identify the sub-directory series that exist for the program or service area.

Conducting the Records Series Inventory

Introduction

Once you have completed the preliminary research into the program or service, the next step is to inventory all the records series, regardless of their media. You may use the inventory form/format introduced in Chapter 4 or one that you have designed yourself.

The review of records holdings that you did during the preliminary review will have set the stage for the records series inventory. Review this data along with any additional information you may have collected when reviewing the program/services records and information systems. You should then be ready to start.

Arrange the inventory at a convenient time for the staff using the records. Try to provide an accurate estimate of the time required for the inventory.

Purpose of the Records Series Inventory

The inventory will provide more detail about the records series within the program or service and will supplement the data already gathered. Once the inventory is complete, you should be able to accurately describe on the records schedule, the contents, purpose, date range, media format and volume or quantity of all the records series.

It is important to understand that the records series inventory along with the other data collection you do, will provide you with the details necessary to describe the records series to the Alberta Records Management Committee on the schedule. For further details on the identification of records series, refer to Chapter 5 of this publication.

It is important to understand that a records series inventory is a high level listing of records series, their contents and characteristics. It is not a detailed inventory of individual file folder contents. This section explains:

- the purpose and level of detail needed for records series inventories; and
- inventory requirements for:
    - paper and imaged records,
    - electronic records including for example applications, web sites and shared directories, and
    - other types of records.

Inventorying Paper and Imaged Records

Paper Records

The majority of the records you will be inventorying will generally be paper records. Therefore most of your time and effort in the record series inventory will be spent on paper records. Paper records will be primarily paper files but may also include printouts, manuals, reports, photographs and other items. Many organizations are using shared drives and/or electronic information management systems to manage the electronic versions of the paper records.

Imaged Records

Imaged records are usually created from paper records. Microfilming and scanning are two imaging processes that exist today. Often imaged records are related to case records and each case file series is considered to be a separate records series.

Emphasize the value and purpose of each records series instead of listing files or documents. Imaged records are often well indexed and clearly labeled. If so, the inventory may be limited to counting the volume (in cubic feet) of imaged records and measuring the space occupied by the micrographic or optical media. Otherwise, examine the contents of a sample of key documents from all records series.

Identify the link between the image and any paper versions of the same records. The imaged records are usually the version that is used in day-to-day operations while the paper versions are stored in off-site storage or destroyed after imaging and verification. Also, be sure to identify the index to imaged records on your inventory. The index may be in paper or electronic form and may be used as a reference to other records. Identify which format, paper or image, is legally admissible in court.

In most microfilming and scanning processes, a duplicate copy often referred to as the security copy is created. The security copy is used only when the imaged record becomes damaged or is lost. The security copy is usually kept off-site, is not considered to be a transitory record and should be included in the inventory.

Completing the Records Series Inventory

The records series inventory is not a detailed file by file inventory. The goal is to create a snapshot of the records series, their contents and characteristics. It should take no more than a few minutes to review an individual cabinet drawer or the contents of a shelf.

For each records storage area or group of records you are inventorying, record the following information:

- the name of the organizational unit (division, branch, section, field office, program/service, etc.) responsible for the records;
- the name and telephone number of contact person(s) responsible for the records;
- the exact physical location of the records; and
- the date the inventory was completed.

For each shelf or cabinet drawer, record:

- the storage equipment identifier number
- the date range of the records

Look inside four or five files. Select from various places in the drawer. Usually the largest files are the oldest and the thinnest the newest.

- the contents (subject matter, major document types)

  Do a visual inspection of the files and summarize the contents. Do not describe the records series in great detail. Emphasize the purpose and value of the records. Describe the major types of documents included such as applications, correspondence, maps, plans, financial statements, etc. A detailed list of file titles is not required.

- whether the records are case or subject (or both)

- whether the records are masters or copies
- the actual physical format or media of the records

The format and condition of the records may affect how long they can be retained in the present format and how easily disposition can be accomplished.

- whether the records are active or inactive
- the actual physical volume of records

Estimate 2 cubic feet for a conventional cabinet drawer and 3 cubic feet for a lateral cabinet drawer or shelf.

Also, record the following (where you can determine it):

- whether records are administrative or operational;
- activity characteristics of records series (number of users served, retrievals, growth rate);
- records classification/indexing system used;
- supporting systems used (charge outs, bring forwards, day files, cross-references, etc.);
- whether there are areas of mixed media for the same information such as paper, microfilm and electronic records;
- types of storage equipment used; and
- whether copies of the records are stored at other locations and how they relate to each other.

Ask your contact any other relevant questions you may have about the records at this time. Ask whether there are related records in different media (eg. audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, etc.). Keep careful notes as this information will be of value when it comes time to interview staff. What you can't determine at this stage can be done later as part of the interview stage.

On the following page is a completed example of a records series inventory form.

Alberta **Agriculture, Food and Rural Development** **SAMPLE ONLY** **Records Series - Inventory**

Division Name Agriculture Services	Branch/Section Name Grant Provision Branch	Program/Service Name	Rural Diversification Grant Program
Program/Service Contact Name/Telephone No. Jamie Chrisa/427-9999	Location of Records 2nd Floor, Longhorn Building, 9909 Western Drive, Edmonton		Date February 14, 1995

Storage Equipment No.	Date of Oldest Records	Date of Most Recent Records	Content: Subject matter, major document types	Case (C) or Subject (S)	Master (M) or Copy (C)	Media	(Status) Active (A) or Inactive (I)	Volume (Cu. Ft.)	
								Admin	Oper
C1 - (Drawer) 2-4 C2 - A11 C3 - A11	April 1984	February 1995	3. Individual Case Files Paper files kept in alphabetical sequence according to last name of applicant. In the case or joint tenancy where two separate last names exist, the alphabetically first last name is the name used for the file. Contents include completed grant application (form AG 323/88), supporting documentation such as financial institution, financial histories, diversification plan, land sketch outlining buildings, drainage, tree lines, pipelines and fences, counselling notes, letters of acceptance or rejection, notices of appeal and final decision. Note: Payment histories are on grant Disbursement Reconciliation Report searchable by applicant name(s) and/or geographic location. Note: These records would be considered as PIB's.	C	M	Paper	A & I		42
Remarks: Type of Classification/Indexing System in Use, Equipment used, Activity Characteristics, etc. Attach additional sheets if necessary							Total Volume		

Inventorying Electronic Records

Electronic records are records that are created and managed using a computer. These include several major types:

- Office documents;
- Electronic mail;
- Application systems records;
- Electronic information management system records; and
- Web content.

The inventory process for these types is described in this topic.

Note: The methodology for inventory, scheduling and disposition of electronic records is not fully developed. It will be established in further detail.

Office Documents

Electronic documents are generated using office tools such as word processing, graphics, spread sheets, electronic mail, electronic fax, web content applications and small database systems. Electronic records can also be captured by downloading documents from the Internet/intranet. Information can be recorded on diskettes, CD ROMs, cassette tapes, local hard drives and on file servers on a local area network (LAN). These records should be included in the records series inventory.

Investigate collections of electronic information storage media (e.g., diskettes, tapes, optical disks, etc.). Examine the contents of these media and describe them on the inventory. Describe the records at the directory level and only sample individual electronic document (files).

First, if you can do this easily, assess which electronic records are transitory records. Commercial software packages are published information and not government records. Unaltered back-up diskettes and cassette tapes would be considered copies and inventoried and included on the schedule. Various electronic drafts of a document may be transitory records. Most documents are created using an office automation tool. Once you have printed and filed the document, consider the electronic draft to be transitory. If you do not print the document, consider the electronic records to be records series and include them on your inventory.

After excluding transitory records, print-out the directory structure of the shared drive in the area. Depending on the practice established in the area regarding the sharing of electronic documents between staff members, you may also need to print-out the directory structure of every hard drive in the area. The directory structure should be designed in such a manner that similar information is stored in the same sub-directories. You will find that some users store all their electronic documents in a common sub-directory structure while others will store the information according to the software package that created the document.

If your organization is using an electronic information management system, you will find that this system manages your directories and records for you.

Listed below is a sample of a directory structure.

Shared Drive:

- INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRANCH (IMB)
  - ADMIN
    - General
    - Acts and Legislation
    - Agreements
    - Committees
    - Disaster Planning
    - Liaison
    - Office Services
    - Public Relations
    - Reports, Studies and Statistics
    - Travel
  - INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT
    - General
    - Electronic Information Management
    - Information Management
    - Information Management Framework
    - Metadata
    - Records Management Program
    - Scheduling and Disposition
    - Security
    - Training
    - Vital Records
    - Web Content Management

Electronic Mail

Electronic mail is an area where there could be a lot of records. If your organization is using electronic mail rather than paper as a primary means of communication, you will have to investigate how electronic mail messages are treated. Issues that need to be discussed include:

- Are all electronic mail messages printed and filed?

Your organization may have a policy in place that states that electronic mail messages will be filed electronically and will not be printed. If this is the case, then standards as to what electronic mail messages are records must be developed and the electronic mail records must be scheduled.

- How are the electronic mail messages managed?

If the user is not producing a hard copy of the electronic message, the electronic version must be scheduled. Most electronic mail systems allow users to "file" their messages into "folders". Users can create their own folders. Obtain a list of the folders for each person. You may also need to look at some of the documents in these folders to assist you in identifying the type of information that is stored.

You may find that there is no consistency in how folders are created between individuals. You may wish to establish some guidelines on naming conventions and how the documents should be filed based on retention periods.

Some organizations may be using an electronic information management system to manage electronic records including electronic mail messages.

- Are there any policies and/or procedures that discuss how long the electronic mail messages should be kept?

Some organizations have set up arbitrary retention periods based on available disk space. This is not the proper basis for determining retention periods however.

- Are backups made of the electronic mail system?

The GoA domain takes care of the electronic mail system backups. If your organization is not using this domain, you need to find out how often backups are being done, what media is used and where the backup media is stored. You also need to find out how recoveries are handled. When systems staff have to use the backup media to restore the system, a verification procedure should be done to ensure the documents that were removed from the system are gone after the system restore is completed. After a restore, there is a potential for electronic mail messages that were deleted to reappear.

For example, a backup is done each day at the end of the working day. First thing in the morning, a user deletes a number of electronic mail messages. That afternoon, a condition occurs (electrical storm) which destroys the hard drive. The damaged hard drive is replaced with a new drive and the backup tapes are used to restore the system. Since the backup was done last night, the electronic mail messages that were deleted in the afternoon will be restored. The user will have to delete the messages again.

Application Systems Records

Application systems are usually custom developed electronic information systems. In most cases, application systems are used to automate information found in case file series (eg. mental health client files). Electronic records created by these application systems must also be inventoried.

Government organizations should schedule electronic records at the time application systems are being developed. As part of this process, the electronic records should be appraised to determine their value, including an archival appraisal by the Provincial Archives to identify records of enduring value. You will usually run across electronic records that are not scheduled because the systems were developed without taking records management issues into account. As application developers become more aware of the importance of these issues, Senior Records Officers or records management specialists should be included in the application development team.

These application systems are often databases that contain important program or function data. They may reside in enterprise minicomputers or on a web site. Depending on the size of the application system, the data maintained by the system may apply to a number of organizational units. For example, the Motor Vehicles application collects and maintains information on vehicle registrations, driver's licenses, driver abstracts, etc. This system contains information that would fall into several different primaries in a subject classification structure.

The inputs and outputs from these systems will likely be part of the records already inventoried. Much of the other information to be gathered is probably already available from the systems documentation.

You need to collect the information related to application systems so that they can be described. These records will include:

- Systems Documentation (including models describing the system configuration and any technical, administrator and user manuals)

The documentation should assist you in understanding the scope of the application system. Rather than reading through all the systems documentation, you may choose to speak to the information technology staff who support the system.

- Application Source Code and Executables (including the development software)

All application systems are written using some sort of development language. Determine what language and version is used. Procedures should be in place to ensure that a copy of the application source code is stored off-site and is refreshed whenever a system modification is made. Also a copy of the development software tools may need to be stored off-site especially if the software is not readily obtainable. In the event of a disaster, having a copy of all the master files is pointless if a copy of the application system does not exist.

- Inputs and Source Documents

These documents will give you an idea of the information collected and entered into the system. Determine what happens to these documents after the information is entered into the system. You may also find that some application systems receive information electronically from other systems. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is an exchange of electronic business documents between trading partners, computer to computer, in a standard format. EDI applications are being phased out and replaced by web-based applications.

If your organization is using EDI or a web-based application, investigate what information is being shared and its source.

Some applications may not have source documents. They may be on-line systems where the information is entered directly into the system. If this is the case for one of your applications, this should be identified on the inventory.

- Process and System Files (including master, index, transaction, batch, tables and backup files)

The master files are the heart of the application system and contain all relevant information. History files may also exist and contain the same type of information as master files except on out-dated or closed records. For example, accounts payable transactions are kept for one fiscal year on the master file. At the end of a fiscal year, the records are copied to the history file and referred to as required. The index is the key to accessing or searching information on the master files. In certain installations, the index to the master files is also the index to the paper files. If this is the case, ensure the index is retained for the paper files as well.

Transaction and batch files change on a frequent basis. Transaction files are used to update the master file and the batch file contains summary totals of the transactions being processed. Tables store information such as printer codes, location information and status codes. The information in these tables does not change frequently. Backup files are a duplicate of all the information in the system at a specific point in time. Backups are done to ensure that the information is available in the event of a disaster, a disaster being anything from a hard disk failure to a natural disaster destroying the building and equipment. Most applications will have a number of backups, such as daily, weekly, and monthly. Some of these backups will be kept off-site.

You may find that the application system also has a production and test environment. The production environment being where the current information is kept and processed, and the test environment where application modifications are tested before being implemented into the production environment. The type of process and system files should be the same, however the actual information in these files may be different. The test environment may not have the same level of backups.

- Outputs and Reports (including statistical, management and program related reports)

There is a trend in application systems away from producing predefined hard copy reports. Application systems have inquiry and ad hoc reporting capabilities so that end-users can generate reports based on their specific requirements. You may or may not choose to print these reports. Rather than trying to identify all possible reports that could be generated, analyze what the reported information is being used for and if this information is being kept somewhere else. Also, try to group reports into categories or functions for which the reports are used rather than list each report. For example, some categories may be:

- audit reports that include transaction listings;
- batch total listings and master file update reports;
- statistical reports that include monthly case load analyses; and
- client profile analyses.

You may find that the application system produces a transaction file which contains information that is read into another application system. Output files should be included in your inventory.

Electronic Information Management System Records

Some organizations may be using electronic information management systems to manage their electronic records. An electronic information management system is usually installed on a network with all users accessing the system. The system provides a method for the organization, storage and quick retrieval of information. Users will "file" electronic documents to this system and the system will keep track of the document. It will control who has access to the document, who changes it, the versions of the document, date created, date last changed, etc. If an electronic information management system is being used in your organization, include it in your inventory. You will have to investigate to determine:

- What electronic records are included?

Determine which type of electronic records are being "filed" into the system (e.g. word processing documents, electronic mail messages, electronic fax machines, spreadsheets, graphic designs, web content, etc.).

- Is the system linked to your classification structure?

Electronic information systems manage documents and information from various repositories. Some also include a records management component. Some manipulation may be required to incorporate a classification structure into the electronic information management system. Identify if the system is linked to your classification structure and how this link is managed. If you are creating or changing the classification structure, you will have to reflect the changes in the electronic information management system.

- Is the retention function being used?

The retention function will indicate how long an electronic document and information has to be kept. Most electronic information management systems will have a feature to manage the retention and disposition of electronic documents and information. Identify what retention periods are being used.

Senior Records Officers should be involved in the evaluation and acquisition of electronic information management systems. The Information Management Branch and the Provincial Archives should be consulted to provide advice on records management and archival issues related to electronic information management. Proposals that involve major changes to record keeping should be brought forward to the ARMC.

Web Content

Most government organizations are using the World Wide Web to disseminate information and/or provide services to their clients. Web sites can be open to the public (Internet), accessible by government staff only (intranet) or accessible by government staff and specific business partners (extranet). Web Content management software may be used to manage the information from creation, approval, publishing to the web site, and removal after the information is superseded or obsolete. The Senior Records Officer should be involved in the implementation and ongoing maintenance of this software to ensure the proper retention periods and final disposition are being used.

Inventorying Other Types of Records

When doing background research, you may discover other types of records such as photographs, maps, plans, films, x-rays, audio tapes and video tapes. Include these types of records in your inventory also. Indicate clearly how they relate to other records (eg. a case file might exist in paper file or electronic format and also have maps, photographs, film, audio tapes etc. maintained elsewhere which are actually part of the case file).

Identify the location and volume of these records. They may be located in filing cabinets, people's offices, semi-active storage, central file rooms or organizational libraries. If detailed lists or indexes exist, you may not need to do an inventory. Schedule the detailed lists and indexes also.

You may find that these types of records exist in more than one format. For example, a photograph may be scanned into an imaging system, maps could be stored in digital format and accessed by a computer system, or audiotapes may be stored on a CD-ROM disk. When you are doing records series inventories, ensure that you take into account all the formats that a record may exist in. Also, identify which is the format that will be considered the master. This may depend on technical limitations (eg. if a digital version is kept, it will have to be updated/converted over time to ensure that it remains accessible). Finally, determine if any of these other types of records are transitory records. For further details about identifying transitory records, see Chapter 6 of this publication.

Photographs

Photographs provide visual documentation of a situation as it existed at a specific point in time. They can provide very valuable information. Determine what type of photographs you are dealing with. Some questions you may want to consider are:

- Are the photographs identified or dated?
- Are they film or digital?
- Are they black and white or colour?
- Are they specific, aerial or scenic photographs? Why were the photographs taken? What purpose do they serve? Do other organizations make use of these photographs?
- To what other records do the photographs/negatives relate?
- Are there copies of these photographs? Where are the copies kept and for what purpose? A copy of a photograph that has been altered or annotated is equivalent to an original.
- How are they stored? Are they framed in an album or loose? How are digital photographs stored?

- Who holds the copyright? Where are the contracts pertaining to the creation or use of the photographs/negatives?
- Where are the negatives? You also need to know the type of negative (eg. silver nitrate) and the conditions under which the negatives are stored such as extremes of temperature, humidity, etc. (nitrate negatives are hazardous particularly if they have been stored incorrectly).

The answers to these questions will help you to determine the value of the photographic records and thus their retention period and final disposition.

Maps and Plans

There are many different types of maps and plans used by the Government of Alberta. A map generated by one organization for a specific purpose, may be used by another organization for an entirely different purpose. For example, road construction maps generated by the Department of Transportation may be used by the Department of Environment to identify possible sites for a wildlife habitat. As well, building construction plans will have various levels of detailed plans.

Some questions to consider are:

- What types of maps or plans are included: road maps, forestry maps, water-way maps, electrical floor plans, dam building plans, etc.? What type of information is depicted on the maps and plans?
- In what format – paper and/or digital?
- Did your organization create these maps and plans? How do they get updated? Who is responsible for maintaining them?
- Do other organizations have copies of these maps and plans? Where are the copies kept and for what purpose?
- What purpose do they serve? Why were the maps and plans generated?
- How are they stored? Are they stored in map boxes or are they loose? Is the digital format managed by an automated system?

- Would any of the collections of maps and plans contain information that would fall under the exceptions to disclosure according to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation?
- What is the volume of maps and plans?
- Do any of the maps and plans have legal value? They may provide proof that specifications or codes have been met.
- What other records do the maps or plans relate to?
- Has an alteration or an annotation been made to a map or plan? That would make the map or plan an original.
- What are the sizes of the maps and plans?
- Are the maps or plans copyrighted?
- Are there indexes or detailed lists of the maps or plans?

Films, Audiotapes and Videotapes

Films are usually created to provide information on a specific topic such as a training film, or to historically document an event such as the migration of settlers into the Peace River area. Audiotapes and videotapes are usually created to document in detail a specific event as it happens. Audiotapes are quite often used in court proceedings and task force committee meetings. Sometimes the audiotapes are transcribed.

Videotapes can be used to provide security information. Some questions you may want to consider are:

- Why were these records created? What purpose do they serve? Do other organizations make use of these records?
- Where are the masters? (eg. with early types of film, the sound and visual image were on separate elements. You need both to produce copies).
- Are there copies of these records? Where are the copies kept and for what purpose?
- Are the films and tapes identified and dated?
- How are they stored?

- Who holds the copyright? Where are the contracts pertaining to the creation of the records?
- What other records do the films or tapes relate to?
- Would any of the films, audiotapes or videotapes contain information that would fall under the exceptions to disclosure according to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation?
- Is special equipment required to display the records? Are there any special environmental conditions necessary for the storage of the records? What is the condition of the records?
- What kind of formats are the films and tapes in (eg. reels, cassettes)? What type of film or tape is used (eg. black and white, colour)? Do negatives exist, and what type of negative is it eg. nitrate)?
- What is the volume of the films and tapes?
- What is the volume of the films and tapes?
- Are there indexes or detailed lists of the films and tapes?

New Formats

As technology continues to advance, there will be more and different ways of storing information. These records have to be inventoried and included in the scheduling project. In general, some of the issues you should address when inventorying records stored on new formats are:

- volume - how many records are there;
- location - where are they kept;
- contents - what type of information is recorded in these records series, how are the records used and for what purpose;
- relationship to other records;
- existence of some form of guide (eg. index, inventory) which must be kept in order to understand and use the new type of record;

- physical format of the records - do you need special equipment to retrieve and read the records, are the records stored in any other format, can the records be easily converted to another format;
- longevity of the storage media; and
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy considerations - would any of these records fall under the exceptions to disclosure?
- *Limitations Act* considerations – would the records on the storage media be retrievable in ten years?

Conclusion

Regardless of the media of the records, you must know the following:

- if all the records maintained by the program or service have been included in the inventory;
- the relationship of the records series to other records series;
- why the records were created and what purpose they serve;
- if the records are copyrighted, who holds the copyright;
- whether the records are affected by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation;
- whether there are indexes or background information supporting the records series (these should be inventoried and scheduled); and
- whether the records are transitory or not (if there is any doubt, the records should not be treated as transitory).

Interviewing Programs/Service Staff

To gain an even more thorough understanding of the functions and activities of the program or service whose records you are scheduling, you will need to interview staff. Each person you interview should be able to tell you what records they use, why they need the records and how they use them. This will help you to determine how long the records need to be kept and what their final disposition should be.

Knowing who to interview is important. You may not have the time or the need to interview everyone in the program or service. You need to interview representatives from all functional areas and levels of the program or service, including:

- managers;
- supervisors;
- professional/technical staff; and
- clerical/support staff.

The people who work with the records can best describe to you their use. They will likely know where the records came from, if copies exist, who needs the records, any computer systems that are used, how long the records are needed and other important information that you need to know to schedule the records. This section explains how to:

- determine who needs to be interviewed;
- set up an interview schedule;
- develop the interview questions; and
- conduct the interviews.

Identifying Interviewees

It is important to interview more staff than just the line managers and supervisors. In many cases, the managers and supervisors use the records in a different way than the front line workers. Also, not all managers and supervisors are aware of how their staff actually use the records. To get a good appreciation of the records, interview a cross-section of front line workers as well as managers and supervisors.

To identify those staff you will interview, you need to determine which ones make decisions on the records (i.e. who determines if an application is completed correctly or if a grant is approved). If records go through several steps or processes, try to interview at least one person in each step or process.

For example, an application is received (mail room logs date and time), checked (clerk checks the application for completeness and enters into a computer system), verified (clerk verifies that the information on the application is correct), and approved (supervisor makes the decision to accept the application). These staff members may only be looking at specific pieces of the record and making decisions on those pieces.

Scheduling Interviews

Once you have identified who you need to interview, you then set up meetings with them. Try to give as much advance notice as possible to give staff members an adequate opportunity to work the meetings into their often busy schedules.

Coordinate the interviews with the program manager and any applicable line managers. In some instances, consider having a line manager and key support staff person present. This may give you a better perspective on how the records are used. The interview time and place should be confirmed with all staff.

Ensure that each person interviewed has a clear understanding of the objectives and benefits of the scheduling process. The user orientation sessions held earlier should have done this. If in doubt, prepare and distribute a short document that outlines these objectives and benefits.

The length of the interview will vary between individuals. Each interview should be no longer than one hour. Try to leave enough time between interviews just in case an interview takes longer than expected. It will also give you time to document the interview before moving on to the next individual.

Interview Tips

Take the following things into consideration when planning your interviews:

- the interview should be held as close to staff's workspace as possible, preferably right at the workspace;
- you might want to provide the interviewee with your questions in advance, so they can have time to prepare; or
- you might want to provide them with copies of your preliminary research and inventory documentation in advance, for validation purposes.

Developing Interview Questions

The project coordinator should develop a list of questions covering the information required to complete the records schedule. Some people prefer free form discussions with users. Others prefer to use a detailed questionnaire. What is important is the accuracy and usefulness of the information obtained, not the method used.

Information Required

Your questions should cover the following:

- the program or service being scheduled;
- the function and activities and associated records series, regardless of media;
- the physical characteristics of the records;
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) considerations;
- retention and final disposition requirements; and
- automated information systems including web sites.

Question Formulation

The following are possible questions regarding the required information. Use some or all of these or reword them to fit your needs. Where the information is already known, use the questions to confirm this. The questions asked will also vary with whomever is being interviewed. Program questions should be posed to managers not to junior staff. Front line staff should be asked questions about their job functions and why and how they use the records.

Program Questions

What is the mandate or purpose of the program or service? What basic activities are performed? Is the program or service centralized or decentralized? If decentralized, is it managed at a regional or district level?

The object of these questions is to identify the purpose of the major records series associated with the program or service. This information is required to present a summary of the program or service on the records schedule.

When did the program or service start? Was it part of another organization previously? Have there been any major changes recently? Are any planned? What are the changes? Is it now obsolete?

It is important to know a brief history of the program or service. This can provide a context for the archival appraisal. Identifying previously responsible organizations may help in locating existing schedules.

For example, quality control of microform applications in the 1970's was often non-existent. Future changes can affect records scheduling. For example, privatization of services may require an existing schedule to be cancelled and a new schedule to be developed to alienate the records.

Are there any changes proposed to the enabling or program specific legislation? Has consideration been given to including retention periods in the legislation itself?

Changes in legislation may radically affect records series retention periods and even business rules of file closure. For example, if a government program expands to include a monitoring or research role, retention periods may have to be increased to ensure that records remain available for that purpose. Also legislative changes may require that private sector (non-government) organizations retain records for a specified time period. As a result, the government must maintain associated records for the same length of time, for example to verify compliance with legislation.

Activity Questions

Briefly describe the activities performed and identify any associated records series. Activities are normally described in terms of their objectives. What is this program or service trying to achieve? How are objectives met? What is the work and information flow between staff?

Some organizational units have only one major program or service with a number of associated activities. Others have many. For example, in Government Services, the Government and Program Support Services Division administers several programs, including for example:

- administration of the government-wide Information and Records Management program; and
- administration of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy program.

Each of these programs has several activities (or functions) with many specific records series that are used to support them. For example, the government-wide information and records management program has a training function with associated course development files and a course participant database. Another function is advisory services which has an organizational program case file series. When looking at programs or services, you must identify all activities and functions and all related information holdings. Then you must find out what is done with the information.

Who keeps the master of the records series? What media is the master stored in? What copies of the records are made and where are they? What copies are kept in different media formats? Multiple copies of records are very common. The definitions "master" and "copy" can be confusing. In a records management environment, these terms have specific meanings.

What other organizations (government or private) are affected by the activities of the program or service? What interaction is there with these organizations? Are there records that are created by government and then transferred to non-government organizations? Or, are there records collected in non-government organizations performing government business?

This information may assist you in identifying record series. It may also suggest closure criteria and retention periods which result from the needs of these other organizations.

What approved records retention schedules exist for the records series identified?

Verify the information already gathered on this. Previously unknown schedules may be identified. Also staff may be made aware of existing schedules which affect the records series they use.

Physical Characteristic Questions

Are there issues related to the physical characteristics and storage of the records? What is the growth rate of the records?

The physical characteristics of records determines the quantity and nature of storage that is required for the records. You need to identify in the schedule any unusual circumstances involved in transferring records to off-site storage (e.g. high volumes, unusual media, special storage requirements, size or shape of the records).

Physical form affects storage and retrieval of records. Records in over-sized ledgers will be difficult to store and retrieve. Note records that require specialized equipment to be read, (e.g. microforms, optical disks, computer diskettes or tapes). This equipment needs to be maintained for the entire life cycle of the records or else the records should be converted to more accessible media.

Physical form is also important as some media are subject to deterioration over time and require particular storage conditions. For example, magnetic media requires dust-free, climate controlled storage and specialized maintenance. They also have a limited lifespan. You need to consider the shelf life and required storage conditions for different media, when assigning retention periods. You may need to consider if an alternative storage media is required. If these records have archival value and the paper media is not of a quality that will last for a long time, an alternative such as microfilming should be considered.

The location of records is also important. If material is inactive and occupying large amounts of office space, consider lower cost interim storage. Also, if inactive records with potential archival value are stored unsafely (e.g. in sheds or leaky or flood prone basements), they should be dealt with as soon as possible.

Growth rate may be difficult to estimate. Annual transfers provide a basic sense of the volume growth. Another determinant for paper records is the number of inches filed per week or month. Covert this to annual growth rates using cubic feet. Estimating growth rates for other media also requires you to assess the amount of tapes, disk space, rolls of microfilm, etc. accumulated over a time period and to convert this to an annual rate.

How are the records created? What electronic information systems exist? Are electronic systems used to create records or to store records or both?

Identify all the electronic systems that create or manage records. If it has not already been done, obtain copies of any systems documentation to assist you in describing these systems later. As more information is stored in databases and electronic information management systems, fewer paper copies of records will be created. You need to identify where this is will be occurring. All records regardless of media must be scheduled.

How are the records organized?

There are a variety of classification and indexing systems used in government organizations. These may include:

- block numeric subject
- functional;
- alphabetic;
- numeric;
- geographic;
- encyclopedic;
- alpha-numeric;
- duplex-numeric; and
- computer directory structures, etc.

The method in which information is arranged is crucial to retrieval. Identify the precise nature of the system. Also, describe the levels and type of indexing used. If it has not already been done, obtain copies of indexes and other related documents, including classification structures, file lists, directory structures and file naming conventions. This information may be used to arrange the records series on the records schedule.

Are there any plans to convert the records to another media?

This should be carefully documented. Although the information may remain the same, with the document image being preserved, the use and accessibility of the records may change drastically. The media selected should be suitable to the length of time the records need to be kept and for any legal requirements. Certain media are unsuitable for long term retention. If there are no plans to convert the records, and the current media may be inappropriate for the required.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) Considerations

Are there Personal Information Banks being maintained and records series that may be subject to the exceptions to disclosure under FOIP? What access restrictions were applied to records in the past?

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation gives the public access to all government records, subject to certain restrictions, and limits the government's collection and use of personal information. The information you collect about FOIP considerations can be used to cancel superseded access restrictions on existing schedules and to identify those records series with particular access or privacy considerations. This information may already have been gathered and you should consult with your organization's FOIP Coordinator. You will have to specify access and privacy considerations on the records schedule.

Note: Alberta Health and Wellness will also need to take into account *Health Information Act* considerations.

Retention and Disposition Questions

What is the closure criteria for each records series? How long must the records remain on-site in the organization after file closure?

A retention period must have a specific start time. When can the record be considered complete or closed? Does closure take place:

- at the end of a calendar year?
- at the end of the fiscal year?
- at some other year end (eg. school year)?
- after receipt of a certain document? Or
- after a directive or policy has become obsolete?

You must differentiate between when a file is actually closed versus a volume being closed. Large files are often split into volumes. This is not the same as file closure.

Next, determine when records are no longer needed. How long will the record be of administrative value? How often is it required after closure, for how long and for what purpose? Do the records need to be on-site for audit purposes or can the audit occur off-site? Active records should not be stored at the Alberta Records Centre. Also, for some media, you may need a migration strategy to ensure the information on the medium is readable and accessible for the required time frame.

Answers to these questions may lead you to re-examine the storage needs for particular records. You may keep fewer records on site and free up equipment or you may need higher density equipment or mobile shelving in order to retain more active files.

Do you feel these records could be destroyed at the end of their life cycle? Why or why not? Is there some historical value? Is there potential for research value (eg. precedent setting cases/issues, "firsts")?

You want to obtain the user's views regarding the final disposition of records. They often have an excellent idea of the potential value and this can later be communicated to archivists.

Other Questions

In addition to the questions outlined in this topic, there will be others arising from the records series inventory that you will have to ask program/service staff that you interview. Some of these generic questions are outlined in *Conducting the Records Series Inventory* (Chapter 4). Any of these questions that are not answered during the inventory process should be asked during the interviews. There will likely be other specific questions about the records series that will arise from the inventory.

Conducting Interviews

The project coordinator should conduct interviews with a good cross section of the staff who work with the records within the program or service. The users interviewed will generally be involved in the user feedback sessions later on in the project. Conduct in depth interviews focusing on the information required to complete the records schedule.

In order for you to get useful information, users should feel confident that you are interested in their needs and concerns. Be friendly and as informative as possible. You must assure them that you are impartial It is the records they use that are being scheduled. You require their recommendation as to the retention and disposition of the records. Your role is to make sure all aspects of the records' use and value are explained so that an informed decision can be made. If they are unsure of your objectives, it may be useful to review the terms of reference with them.

Orientation

Take some time at the beginning of the interview to briefly explain your role and, if necessary, the scheduling process. Once the user is well informed, begin your questions. Ensure that you are both going to talk about the same program, service or records series. Make reference to the physical location and format of the records you wish to discuss.

Attentiveness

Be prepared to take point-form notes and spend most of the interview listening. You can always call back to clarify a point. This is a chance to hear user's opinions and assess potential problems that may arise at the negotiating phase.

Completion

Interviews should be brief. They should take less than an hour to complete an interview. Inform the user that the data will be used to develop the draft records schedule which will be reviewed with them later at the user feedback sessions. If possible, indicate when that will happen.

5.

Identifying and Categorizing Records Series

Introduction

Once you have collected the data you need, you begin the process of constructing the schedule. At this point in the project, you will have collected data about:

- the organization, its programs, services, functions, activities, purpose, structure and plans; and
- the records, their contents, physical characteristics, use and purpose.

Now you need to complete the identification of the records series (or items) in the program/service area you are scheduling. This chapter provides guidance on the identification and categorization of records series. From the data that you collected, you should be able to list all of the records series in the program or service, whatever their media.

What is a Records Series?

A *records series* is a group or unit of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit and that can be evaluated as a unit for scheduling purposes.

Case Records

Many records series you will encounter will be *case* records. Case records are records that contain information relating to a specific action, event, person, place or project, with a specific beginning and ending date. The documentation in each file in a case records series is usually similar. The title of each file will vary. Some examples of case records series are:

- employee files;
- contract files; and
- expense claim files.

There are many others. Each individual case records series you identify should be listed as a distinct records series.

Subject or Function Records

You will also identify many *subject or function* records during your data collection. Subject or function records are records that contain information relating to specific or general topics and that are arranged according to their informational content or by the function/activity/transaction they pertain to. The purpose of these records is to bring together records and information on the same topic or function in order to facilitate information retrieval.

Categories of Subject or Function Records

Subject or function records can be sub-divided into two categories:

- records related to the development of legislation, policies, standards, guidelines, procedures, publications, training materials, etc. These records usually have long term reference value to programs and services and should be retained until superseded or obsolete (termination of program/service, substantial change in legislation, policy, etc.); and
- records that are general in nature, usually dealing with the routine operations of a program or service. These records have shorter term administrative value to the program or service and less long term reference value than the first category.

Electronic Records Series

All government organizations use information technology in their day-to-day operations. This technology generates electronic records that need to be managed like other records. Some of these electronic records will be transitory. When you use office automation tools such as word processing or spreadsheets to create paper documents and you treat the paper documents as masters and file them, you do not have to describe the electronic records on the schedule as they would be considered to be transitory.

When you use office automation tools, such as electronic mail and fax and the records are retained only in electronic form (i.e. you do not print or file a paper version) then the electronic records would not be transitory and would have to be described on the schedule. You will also find that most application systems have electronic records that should be included on the schedule.

Organizing electronic records into records series requires that you understand the functions of the application and the relationship of the electronic records to records in other media. You need to understand what information is captured, how it is used and the types of reports generated. Depending on the complexity of the application, the information stored could represent one or more records series. For example, a mail label application has only one function - to print labels. The electronic records in this application would be defined as one records series. However, a motor vehicle application that tracks drivers and automobiles could have several records series. The application functions may include tracking valid drivers, the number of accidents a driver has had, and the vehicles registered to a driver. You would probably document these electronic records as three records series: static driver information which needs to be kept as long as the driver has a valid license; driver abstract which needs to be kept for 4 years from the date the accident occurred; and vehicle information which needs to be kept as long as the vehicle is being driven.

You may also find that the information in the electronic records may have different formats that will need to be captured on the schedule. Management reports may be generated as a paper document. Most application systems are backed up on a regular basis (daily, weekly and/or monthly) in the event of a disaster or equipment failure. The backup units such as tapes or cartridges should also be included on the schedule.

If your organization has an electronic information management system to manage electronic documents and information, you will need to identify what type of information is included and how it is organized. These systems can manage information generated by office products, electronic mail messages, web content, electronic faxes, etc. You may find that the structure used in this system is compatible with the existing records classification structure. The retention and disposition of these electronic records would be included in the same records series already identified on the schedule for similar records in paper format.

Multi-Media Records Series

A records series could consist of records in various media. You will probably find that records on each media are created at a specific period in the life of the record and are being used for slightly different purposes.

For example, information on mental health clients could exist on several different media, such as:

- paper (created when the client first comes into receive treatment);
- electronic formats (created when the client first comes in); and
- microfilm (created after the client has not received treatment for 5 years).

The paper copy is created to document the treatment and progress of the client. The electronic record contains summarized information on the client to assist staff in tracking the paper file especially if the client moves from/to another region. The electronic record would also be used for clients and worker case load management. The microfilm copy is made when the client's record is considered inactive. All of these records on the different media should be documented as sub-items of the same records series.

You will also have to determine master/copy/duplicate relationships between the different formats. See Master/Copy/Duplicate Relationships in Chapter 7.

Reviewing Collected Schedule Data

Collected Data

During the various phases of data collection, you gathered information on what records series are kept, what their purpose and value is, and how long they should be retained. From the data collected, you can now identify precisely what records series are maintained.

Existing Schedules

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the contents of existing schedules should be interpreted with caution. However, the item listings on the schedules will give you a good clue as to what records series exist. Keep in mind though that an item listing is not necessarily a records series. It is possible that several item listings could constitute one records series. The records series inventory and the interviews should have identified for you what are or are not records series.

File Lists

Similarly, the file lists you collected will have given you a good idea of what records series exist. Again, the inventory and interviews should have verified this for you.

Systems Documentation

The systems documentation you collected should have identified the electronic records series present in the program or service. The inventory and interviews should have confirmed this.

Reviewing Inventory Data

The degree of review required will depend on how well organized the records currently are. Existing classification structures or file lists may already identify records series. Systems documentation may describe applications systems in detail. Examine all these sources first.

If the records are not well organized, you will need to review the information gathered from the inventory to identify the records series rather than relying on file lists. These will often correspond to the activities conducted in the program or service. You should have noted records from application systems on the inventory. Ensure all record series generated from these systems are identified.

Reviewing User Interviews

Review the data from user interviews to confirm that all records series and application systems identified have been inventoried. Review any records series or information system inventoried and not identified by users and obtain further information as to its purpose. These records or information systems may have been created and used under a program or service that is now defunct. Confirm that you have obtained all classification structures, file lists, file plans, indexes and system documentation.

Note which record series are considered as active or inactive and when closed files are no longer required. Identify the file closure criteria and any user requirements for inactive or semi-active records. Note other records management needs or problems. For example, space problems or reasons for lengthy records retention may become important when assigning retention periods.

You need to confirm that you have obtained all legislation identified as relating to the program or service. This will be required when you describe the program or service mandate and assess the legal value of the records. You may also require copies of legislation when you assess retention periods and final disposition.

Listing Identified Records Series

When you are confident that you have identified all the records series in a program or service, compile them into a list along with any supporting information you have collected. At this point, the only organization or classification you need to do is to categorize the records series into administrative and operational records. The scheduling of administrative records and of other special categories of records covered in Chapter 6 (Using Government-Wide Schedules). For these records series, the process of organizing and documenting the records series as well as the remaining phases of the scheduling process has already been done for you. You will, however, have to perform these tasks to schedule the operational records series. The difficulty of this will depend largely on how well organized the records are and how well you have researched the program/service and its records.

6.
Using Government-Wide Schedules

Introduction

Government-wide records schedules have been developed for common records series and special categories of records. Information Management Branch develops and updates these government-wide schedules on behalf of the Alberta Records Management Committee. Common government-wide schedules save you the time and effort involved in developing schedules for these categories of records.

Once you have identified all the records series in the program/service you are scheduling, examine the government-wide schedules to see if they can be applied to any of the records series.

Listed below are the government-wide records schedules that have been developed to date and which are covered in this chapter.

- Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA) (Schedule #1986/50);
- Personnel Records Schedule (Schedule #1984/197);
- Ministerial Action Requests Records Schedule (Schedule #1992/129);
- Executive Records Schedule (Schedule #1991/103);
- Sysouts Records Schedule (Schedule #1984/165); and
- Transitory Records Schedule (Schedule #1995/007).

For further information on the use or interpretation of these government-wide schedules, contact Information Management Branch.

Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA)

Introduction

The *Administrative Records Disposition Authority* (ARDA) (Schedule #1986/50) is a common records classification structure and retention and disposition schedule for administrative records in the Government of Alberta. It provides standard records series titles, descriptions, retention periods and final disposition for administrative records.

ARDA provides a guide for organizing administrative records (eg. administration, buildings and sites, finance, information management, materials and equipment, and personnel). Administrative records covered by ARDA are common to all government organizations.

Approval To Use ARDA

Government organizations must obtain approval from the Alberta Records Management Committee to use ARDA as a retention and disposition schedule. You do not need the approval of the ARMC to use ARDA as a classification structure guide.

Current Limitations

There are limitations to be aware of when using ARDA:

- ARDA was designed primarily for government departments that fell within the purview of the central administrative agencies of government (Finance, Personnel Administration Office, Infrastructure, etc.). Use of certain ARDA retention periods by government organizations that are not departments (eg. boards, agencies, commissions, councils, crown corporations, etc.) may not be appropriate.
- ARDA was developed in 1986 and has not had a major review since. There have been major changes in organizational structure, business processes and the use of information technology since 1986, that have affected the usefulness of ARDA.
- There are several areas where staff may misinterpret ARDA's design and file operational records in administrative blocks. This is especially prevalent in the Administration Block. The danger is that valuable operational records, unique to your organization, may be incorrectly identified as administrative records and destroyed prematurely.

Rule of Thumb: If records are created that relate to the specific mandate of your organization and other organizations are not likely to have them, consider them to be operational.

Suitability of ARDA

ARDA may not be suitable as a classification structure and records schedule for your organization's administrative records. ARDA was primarily designed for government departments. Agencies, boards, commissions and crown corporations may find that their administrative records are not created or organized the way ARDA suggests. For example, if you work for an agency, board, commission or crown corporation, you may have different funding sources, accounting systems or payroll arrangements. The approach to acquiring accommodations may differ as well. Human resources issues such as bargaining arrangements or benefits may also be different in your organization. If this is the case, you may need to prepare a customized administrative records schedule based on your organization's requirements. You can, however, use ARDA as the basis for developing a customized administrative records schedule.

Having established that ARDA applies to your administrative records, you can use it to provide the classification structure for your administrative records. You must have a records classification structure based on or compatible with the structure found in ARDA before applying for permission to use ARDA. ARDA uses a block numeric subject classification structure. Each primary heading has a retention period associated with it. Once approval has been received to use ARDA as a schedule, it is usually only applicable to those units within the organization that have a file classification structure based on or compatible with ARDA.

Some of the retention periods in ARDA may not meet your requirements. Where this is the case, you can still use ARDA as the basis for your administrative records classification structure. However, you will have to assign different retention periods to records series with retention requirements unique to your organization. You must include these proposed amendments to ARDA in your submission to the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC) for approval to use ARDA as a schedule.

Application to Alberta Records Management Committee

Government organizations must apply to the Alberta Records Management Committee to use ARDA. Applications must be made to the Alberta Records Management Committee with the following documentation:

- a memorandum from the organization's Senior Records Officer to the Secretary of the ARMC requesting permission to use ARDA as a schedule for its administrative records; and
- a copy of the organization's administrative records classification structure including any proposed retention period modifications.

The ARMC may also request further supporting documentation or request an on-site examination of records by the Information Management Branch and the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Conditions and Limitations

The Alberta Records Management Committee may impose conditions and limitations on the use of ARDA in your organization. Your organization cannot use ARDA unless it meets these conditions and limitations. The ARDA publication explains these conditions and limitations in detail. Here are the key conditions and limitations.

- Legislation Supersedes ARDA

ARDA is automatically superseded by any legislation if there is a conflict for particular items in ARDA. This conflict can be with either the retention periods or the final disposition. Also, the Master and Subsidiary Agreements between the Government of Alberta and The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees have precedence over items in ARDA.

- Central Agency Operational Records

Central agencies generally provide services which program departments view as administrative (eg. finance, accommodation, personnel etc.). Central agencies, such as the Personnel Administration Office, Finance and Infrastructure, must submit operational records schedules to the Alberta Records Management Committee for records series that relate to the exercise of their government-wide mandate. However, these organizations may use ARDA for their own administrative records.

- File Conversions

If you are only now in the process of converting your administrative records to a block numeric or functional classification structure similar to or compatible with ARDA, the ARMC may restrict your use of the ARDA as a schedule. They may not permit a unit within your organization to use ARDA as a retention schedule until the records have been converted to the block numeric or functional system. The ARMC may ask you to provide a list of organizational units as they are converted and become eligible to use ARDA as a retention schedule.

Amending ARDA

If because of circumstances unique to your organization, you need to modify an ARDA retention period or final disposition after approval to use ARDA has been obtained, an amendment to ARDA (for your organization) along with sufficient justification must be submitted to the Secretary of the Alberta Records Management Committee for approval by the Committee.

Personnel Records Schedule

Introduction

In 1984, the Public Records Committee approved a "blanket" schedule for the disposition by Senior Records Officers of common personnel (or human resources) records in government organizations. The Personnel Records Schedule, with some amendments, was adopted as the Personnel Block of ARDA. Because ARDA was not approved for use by all government organizations, the Personnel Records Schedule was left in effect for use by organizations that did not have approval to use ARDA. Therefore, retention periods and final disposition for all common personnel records series are standardized regardless of which schedule you are using.

Use

Government organizations that do not have permission to use ARDA as a records schedule must use the Personnel Records Schedule (Schedule #1984/197-A6) to dispose of their common personnel records. Copies of the Personnel Records Schedule can be obtained from the Records Scheduling System (RSS).

Ministerial Action Requests Records Schedule

Introduction

Ministerial Action Requests are a document control process for action/responses by government organizations to requests for action received from Minister's Offices. Such requests are assigned an Action (AR) number and are attached to an AR form so that timely action or response is ensured via a Ministerial Action Request tracking/control system. Requests typically deal with the operations of the department and can range from routine inquiries to highly complex issues requiring resolution.

Use

This schedule (#1992/129) has tightly defined parameters under which it can be implemented. They are as follows:

- The schedule applies only to copies of the Ministerial Action Request that are used for control processing.
- The copies must be physically stored in the organization. This schedule does *not* presently pertain to ministerial action request documentation housed in Minister's Offices or designated ministerial records storage areas in the organization.

- The master Ministerial Action Request must be filed on the relevant subject or case file.

- If your organization is only filing Action Requests documentation in a numeric series and not by subject, this schedule cannot be applied. You would then have to schedule the Ministerial Action Request file series as part of your scheduling project.

Use of this schedule is optional. Unique schedules may be developed to meet specific organizational needs but the ARMC will review the schedules from the perspective of consistency.

Content

The retention period and final disposition in the Ministerial Action Requests Schedule (#1992/129) for the control processing copies of the action request files is as follows:

Department	Records Centre	Final Disposition
3 years	0	Destroy

The action request material housed in the subject file would assume the retention period of the subject file.

Where the masters are not filed on a subject or case file in the organization, but in an "action request series" filed in AR number order (typically in the Deputy Minister's office), each AR file in this action request series must be assessed individually by content.

NOTE: This schedule is under review.

Executive Records Schedule

Introduction

The Executive Records Schedule (#1991/103) is a government-wide schedule for records created by executive offices. Executive records are those created by the deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers of departments and their equivalents in agencies, boards, commissions, crown corporations etc.

Use

The schedule was designed only for executive offices whose records are filed separately. It does not apply to those executive records that are integrated in central records offices with records from other organizational units.

Content

This schedule covers both the administrative and operational records of executive offices. All record formats and media are included. It covers records from 1970 to the present. The retention period and final disposition are as follows:

Department	Records Centre	Final Disposition
Until superseded and/or obsolete	5 years	Selective retention by the Provincial Archives; Destroy the rest.

Access Restriction

- Access to records stored in the Alberta Records Centre is strictly controlled in accordance with an organization's wishes as identified on the transfer form.
- Access to records transferred to the Provincial Archives of Alberta is governed by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

NOTE: This schedule is under review.

Sysouts Records Schedule

Introduction

The Sysouts Records Schedule (#1984/165) is a government-wide schedule for the disposition of computer sysouts.

What are Sysouts?

Sysout is a term used to define statistical reports relating to the internal operations of computer systems. These reports are used by computer processing staff to monitor the operation of computer systems.

Use

This schedule is intended to be used by those agencies that do not have approval to use ARDA. These records are also scheduled under ARDA (item #0830).

Content

The schedule is provided as follows:

COMPUTER SYSTEM ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICAL REPORTS (Commonly referred to as SYSOUTS)

When computer systems are run in the provincial government, each job-run has a printout report attached which includes certain Administrative Statistical Information (ASI). This information relates to the actual operation of the computer system. Data may include step-end statistics, computer time used, C.P.U. cycles used, charges/billing information, format specifications, system size (no. of records entered), etc.

This information is used by data processing staff to monitor system operation eg. system time used in conjunction with the number of records processed in order to ensure accurate billing and/or functioning of the system. Normally, comparisons are done with the previous production cycle reports. ASI material does not include original reconciliation reports, edit routines or other reports which are particular to individual computer systems.

Sysouts retained in electronic form will be addressed subsequent to the development of electronic records management guidelines.

ITEM No.	**DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (describe series purpose and indicate if related to HQ or field office)**	**DATES (range)**	**KEEP (years)**		**FINAL DISPOSITION**
			Dept.	**RC**	
1.	Computer systems which do not relate to financial transaction information.	1975 to date	6 Mos.and/or completion of comparison/verification with reports generated by next Production Cycle (whichever is longer).		Destroy
2.	Computer Systems which relate to financial transactions or upon which financial transactions are based.	1975 to date	6 Mos.	2 Yrs.	Destroy

NOTE: This schedule is under review.

Transitory Records Schedule

Introduction

Transitory records are records in any media that:

- have only immediate or very short-term usefulness;
- are not regularly filed in an administrative or operational records or information system; and
- are required only for a limited period of time for the completion of a routine action or the preparation of record.

Transitory records are records that are not required to meet statutory obligations or to sustain administrative or operational functions. Records required for statutory, legal, fiscal, administrative or operational purposes must be retained in a regular records or information system and disposed of separately, subject to the approval of the Alberta Records Management Committee.

A government-wide schedule (#1995/007) has been established to allow government organizations to routinely dispose of transitory records.

Categories of Transitory Records

1. *Advertising*

Advertising material includes solicited or unsolicited information received from businesses or individuals advertising their products and services. Examples of advertising material are paper or electronic brochures, company profiles, sales letters, menus, catalogues, and price lists. Business units may choose to retain and file advertising material relevant to their operations.

2. *Blank Information Media*

Blank Information Media includes anything that was intended to be used for collecting or storing information but was not used, or has been used and erased, and has become obsolete. Obsolete stationery and blank forms are examples. Another example is blank storage media such as video or audio tape, citation tapes, diskettes, compact disks, digital video disks, magnetic tapes or hard drives, which must be destroyed to prevent the possible recovery of erased information.

3. *Draft Documents and Working Materials*

Draft documents and working materials include draft versions of correspondence, reports, and other documents as well as research and working materials collected, and used in the preparation of documents. Once the final version of a document is completed and distributed, and a copy is filed in an official filing system as the master record, most drafts and working materials become transitory records.

NOTE: Not all drafts and working materials are automatically transitory. In some cases, offices responsible for drafting legislation (acts, regulations, order-in-council), legal documents (contracts, agreements, etc.), policy, audit reports, budgets, research materials, standards, guidelines, procedures, communications materials (publications, posters, films, etc.) or for conducting scientific research (laboratory notes, calculations, etc.) might need to track the evolution of the final product. These offices may need to keep various drafts, research and working materials in order to have a record of changes that were made and why.

4. *Duplicates*

Duplicates are exact copies of documents where:

- nothing substantive has been added, changed or deleted;
- the copies have been used for reference and information purposes only; and
- the master version of the document has been filed in the official filing system.

A record must meet all three of these conditions to be a duplicate. If something has been added, changed or deleted then it is no longer a duplicate. It could still be transitory, however, depending on the significance and future value of the addition, change or deletion. Some examples of duplicates are:

- photocopies of paper documents
- copies of government brochures and pamphlets;
- duplicates of microfilm, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.
- duplicate audio or video recordings;
- electronic copies of e-mail messages and other electronic documents; and
- prints of microfilmed or imaged documents, e-mail messages or other electronic documents that are not the file copies for filing systems.

5. *External Publications*

External publications include books, magazines, periodicals, pamphlets, brochures, journals, newspapers and software documentation, whether printed or electronic, obtained from sources outside an organization. If they will have no future value, they can be discarded after use. Copyrighted information contained in these publications belongs to the publisher under copyright laws, not to the Government of Alberta, despite the fact that the government has purchased the publication.

NOTE: The master copies of publications produced by or for an organization are not transitory and should be filed. Extra copies of obsolete internal publications are transitory. They are examples of duplicates. The Government of Alberta holds the copyright for publications that were developed and issued by or for government organizations.

6. *Information of Short-Term Value*

Documents with information of short-term value contain information that is of little or no interest, or importance to an office or is useful for only a brief period of time after which it has no further value. These documents do not have to be filed and can be routinely disposed of once employees are finished with them.

Some examples are:

- routine notices or memos regarding holidays or special events circulated to all staff or posted in public folders;
- insignificant or inconsequential information items concerning routine administrative or operational matters;
- other issues not pertaining directly to your office or not requiring you to act;
- personal messages and information; and
- routing slips and opened envelopes.

NOTE: The business units where these types of records originate should retain a *file copy* if the records document their activities and have some future value.

Retention Periods/Final Disposition

The retention periods and final disposition for all categories of transitory records are as follows:

Closure Criteria	Retention Period	Final Disposition
Superceded or Obsolete	0 Y	Destroy

7.

Developing an Operational Records Schedule

Introduction

This chapter provides guidance on the:

- organization of the operational records series into a logical arrangement for the schedule;
- linkage between the records schedule and the subject or functional classification structure;
- description of the records series;
- identification and documentation of legal references;
- identification and documentation of FOIP references; and
- analysis of master/copy/duplicate relationships.

Organizing Operational Records Series

The task of organizing the operational records series into a logical structure may or may not be difficult depending on how well the records series are currently organized. The first thing you must do is to compare the list of operational records series you identified with the existing subject or functional classification structure being used in the program or service.

Comparing Records Series List with Existing Subject Classification structure

When you have collected and reviewed the existing subject classification structure and file lists of the program or service, you probably discovered one of the following three scenarios:

- a Block Numeric records classification structure in place;
- some other subject or functional records classification structure in place; or

- no apparent classification structure in place.

If you noticed many discrepancies when comparing the existing classification structure to the records series you identified during your data collection, you probably should not use the existing classification structure as a basis for the operational schedule. Instead, you will have to create an arrangement based on the records series identified in the data collection. The classification structure can then be upgraded later, to match the schedule arrangement.

Integrated Subject or Functional Classification Structure/Schedule

The integrated model is usually implemented on an organization-wide basis and is centrally controlled by the Senior Records Officer, although it could be implemented by individual programs or services. For Block Numeric subject structures each program or service may form a block, part of a block, or more than one block in the classification structure. For Functional structures, each program is normally a function. The development of the classification structure and the schedule is ideally done together in this model although one may precede the other. The integrated model is an acceptable method of organizing records series on schedules. Contact your Senior Records Officer or the Information Management Branch for further details.

High Level Records Series Organization

The Block Numeric and functional records classification structures are the standard approaches to classification in the government.

Assign closure criteria and retention periods to each records series based on your analysis of records value. To make implementation easier, develop consistent closure criteria and retention periods for general subject records series. Because you have assigned the same closure criteria and retention periods and recommended the same final disposition for related general subject records series, you can combine them into one or more items on the schedule.

In this high level record series organization model, each case file series would be treated as a separate records series because they will have a unique closure criteria and may have a different retention period and final disposition than the related subject records series. Records relating to legislation, policy, standards, guidelines, procedures, etc. will also be treated as one or more distinct records series because they are kept in active storage until they are superseded or obsolete and then often longer in semi-active storage and/or the records centre. They may also have a different final disposition.

Non-standard Classification Structures

Non-standard classification structures will require more analysis. If the non-standard classification structure meets the needs of the program and of the organization as a whole, and is up-do-date and functioning well, you can base the records schedule on the existing structure. Begin by identifying the level within the existing structure that represents a records series. It should be the equivalent of the primary level in the block numeric system. You will assign retention periods to this level when you have completed your analysis.

No Existing Classification Structure

Even if there is no formal classification structure in place currently, the program or function staff probably arrange the records in some way. Your interviews and inventories will explain this. If the records are poorly organized, you may have no convenient basis on which to develop your records schedule.

Arranging the Records Series for the Schedule

If you have no structure to follow, you will have to create one. It should follow one of the two models outlined above. For the records schedule to be easy to implement, it must reflect the way in which the records are maintained. Ideally, records scheduling should follow classification development although this is not always possible. Although you do not have to implement the classification structure immediately, it is a good idea to have a conceptual design for it prior to scheduling the records.

The operational records of a program or service will usually but not always correspond to one or more blocks in an organizational block numeric subject classification structure. Each records series identified in your project will usually correspond to a primary or group of primaries. Records series should be arranged logically according to how the program or service functions. Records series are generally listed in alphabetical order in classification structures and schedules.

Electronic Records - Directories and Sub-Directories

Virtually every government program and service now uses personal computers, often connected together on a local area network. Records (a group of similar records are called files) will be stored on hard drives, diskettes, cassettes and tapes. Files are organized according to directories and subdirectories. However, if your organization is using an electronic information management system, you will find that the system manages your files and the directory structure. You will also find that you will not be restricted to the conventional eight character naming structure. Usually when you implement an electronic information management system you would do some analysis on how documents will be organized, identified, used and retained. You may also find that each document has a document profile with a field for a file number from your records classification structure.

Having collected the directory structures in your inventory, review them now and identify those that represent records series. Add each of these to your schedule records series structure.

Identifying Which Directory Level is a Records Series

Suppose you are examining a directory structure and you come across the following path structure:

C:\HUMARESO\EMPLFILE\SMITH.PER

Where "HUMARESO" stands for Human Resources, "EMPLFILE" stands for Employee Files and "SMITH.PER" is the surname of the employee. The records series in this case is Employee Files and it is the "EMPLFILE" sub-directory that is treated as a records series.

Application Systems

Electronic records maintained by application systems must also appear in the records series structure. Most of these electronic records will be treated as a records series. The inputs, processes and outputs would also be documented as part of the records series and may require more details. For example, there may be a number of types of reports. Audit reports should be separated from management reports because they contain different types of information and are used by different people for different purposes. Also, the audit reports may have a different retention than the management reports.

For complex application systems, you may need to provide details on the functions of the system. You will also have to organize the electronic records in records series keeping related data together. Be sure to include the on-site and off-site backup files. An example of a complex application is the Motor Vehicle application. It collects and maintains information on vehicle registrations, driver licenses, driver abstracts, etc. The records series for the electronic records would be: Vehicle Registration, Driver Registration; Driver Abstracts; and Backup Files. Also define the input/source documents, process/system files and outputs/reports as separate records series. The length of time each of these are kept will vary because of the different legislation and policies that govern the information.

Although the system documentation and the application source code/executables are currently included under ARDA Item Number 0830, they should be scheduled with the application system. ARDA will be amended to remove system documentation and application source code/executables.

Developing Records Series Descriptors

Records Series Descriptors

You will need to develop a *descriptor (or scope note)* for each records series. A records series descriptor summarizes the subject content of all records in the records series, describes the major types of documentation within the files and documents the purpose of the records series. It needs to describe the content clearly so that business units, Alberta Records Management Committee and Provincial Archives staff can readily understand them.

If a records series equates to a primary in a well designed records classification structure, you should be able to use the primary descriptor on the schedule. From your interviews and data gathering, you will have accumulated much information. It is your task to summarize this into a cohesive and accurate description of the records series.

Terminology

Above all else use plain language. Technical terminology may be fine for day-to-day program operations, but this schedule will be reviewed and used by a number of people who are not in that specific field (eg. accountants, legal staff, archivists, records management support staff, etc.). Also this schedule may be in operation for a long period of time. Terminology could change quite radically over time.

Abbreviations

Acronyms and abbreviations should be written out in full so they may be understood by Alberta Records Management Committee members. If they must be used extensively in the description, spell out only the first instance of the acronym or abbreviations and put the acronym behind in parentheses.

Length

It is difficult to say how long or how short a descriptor should be. But, it must accurately describe the records series and be easily understood by a "lay" person. From reading the descriptor, the reader should be able to get a mental picture of the records series and their content.

First of all, the description must be such that anyone could review each records series and determine the validity of the proposed retention period and final disposition.

Records series descriptors that exceed half a page in length are likely too long. Descriptors that are one or two lines in length are probably too short.

Following is an example of a good primary descriptor:

Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Program - General

Includes policies, program information, plans, information requests, fundraising ideas and proposals, etc. related to Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Program. This program is designed to enhance and better manage wildlife viewing opportunities throughout the province as well as to increase public awareness and appreciation of Alberta's diverse wildlife.

Identifying and Documenting Legal References

Legal References

From the legal/legislative research and interviews that you did earlier in the scheduling project, you will have determined what legal citations or references apply to the various records series in a program or service. These references will have to be documented on the schedule form.

Documenting Legal References

Bring to the attention of the Alberta Records Management Committee, situations where legislation, regulations, Orders-in-Council, Ministerial Orders or agreements directly affect or dictate records retention and/or disposition. This is also important for individuals who will be interpreting or amending the schedule later on. Include on the schedule legal citations you documented earlier.

Alberta Justice has a legislative publication that indicates the proper method to cite legislation. An excerpt from the publication is included here:

> Statutes (Acts) are referred to by their titles. For court and other legal purposes, a complete citation would consist of the title of the act followed by a reference to the more recent of
> - the most recent statute revision in which that act was included
> - the year in which the act was enacted (received Royal Assent)
>
> plus the chapter number of the act.
>
> Entirely new public acts are given alpha-numeric chapter numbers; other acts are numbered Chapter 1, 2, 3 etc.
>
> The statute revision is cited in this form: Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000. This may be abbreviated as RSA 2000.
>
> Years of enactment are cited in this form: Statutes of Alberta, 2002. This may be abbreviated as SA 2002.
>
> Here are some examples of citations of acts:
> *Cooperatives Act* (SA 2001 cC-28.1);
> *Hospitals Act* (RSA 2000 cH-12);
> *Public Works Amendment Act*, 2002 (SA 2002 c21).

Legal Opinions

In many cases, it is useful or necessary to attach a legal opinion from your legal advisor to the schedule. This will normally be done in situations where there is a need to support, justify or clarify a proposed retention period or final disposition, or to interpret the effect of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* on the records series. Some organizations, due to the nature of their programs and records, may need to routinely vet their schedules with their legal advisor.

Identifying Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) References

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act affects the management of records. Until October 1, 1995, government organizations applied access restrictions to records in the Provincial Archives of Alberta by noting the desired restrictions on records schedules submitted to the Alberta Records Management Committee for approval. These existing schedules restricted access to the records from the date of transfer to the Provincial Archives.

These access restrictions were superseded by the proclamation of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and are no longer valid. An exception to this would be records exempted from FOIP under section 4 or 5 but still subject to the *Records Management Regulation*. The ARMC will continue to have authority to approve access restrictions requested by government organizations for these records. Previously approved access restrictions on records in this category are still valid.

FOIP provides for public access to all government information, subject to limited and specific exceptions. As well, it limits the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by government. The FOIP Coordinator should work with the SRO to identify how records series are affected by FOIP. Records that are transferred to the Provincial Archives will be subject to the access provisions of the Act. The Archives will have to provide access to a specific record if a request is made on it and the records are not subject to an exception. Where sections of the *FOIP Act* apply to a records series, this reference must be documented on the schedule.

Research

It is important to be familiar with the provisions of FOIP, especially the following:

- the exceptions to disclosure;

- whether an exception is mandatory or discretionary, (i.e. is there any discretion in applying it);
- when personal information can be collected from other persons, and
- when personal information must be retained and for how long.

Where any questions arise, you should discuss these with the FOIP Coordinator or your organization's legal counsel. Have the FOIP Coordinator assist you with identifying FOIP references or review those you identify.

The *FOIP Guidelines and Practices Manual* issued by the Access and Privacy Branch, Alberta Government Services will also be a useful research tool.

User Input

Review the access restrictions applied previously to records covered by the scheduling project. These should have been identified from your review of the access restrictions applied previously to records covered by the scheduling project.

This review may also help you identify where users need to be advised of superseded access restrictions. This should be noted for the user feedback sessions. As well, note any current FOIP restrictions that users should be advised of.

FOIP Exceptions

In general, the *FOIP Act* provides an exception to public access to government records for:

- confidential third party business information, (e.g. trade secrets or financial information) (Section 16);
- private personal information about a third party (e.g. medical, employment, educational, political or religious affiliation, etc.) (Section 17);
- information harmful to individual or public safety (Section 18);
- confidential evaluations (Section 19);
- information harmful to law enforcement (Section 20);
- information harmful to intergovernmental relations (Section 21);
- Cabinet and Treasury Board confidences (Section 22);

- advice from officials (Section 24);
- information harmful to economic and other interests of a public body (Section 25);
- testing procedures, tests and audits (Section 26);
- information subject to legal privilege (Section 27);
- information harmful to conservation (Section 28); and
- information that is or will be available to the public (Section 29).

Some of the exceptions to disclosure have time limits set as to when the information can become public. If records fall into one of the exception categories, check the Act for time limits.

Identify records series where the access restrictions apply. Also note whether the restriction is mandatory or discretionary. Cite the applicable FOIP section and subsection (if any).

Routinely Disclosed Information

In addition to identifying records series on the schedule that are subject to one of the exceptions to disclosure, also identify on the schedule those records series that are routinely disclosed to the public outside of FOIP.

Records Subject to Section 4 of the FOIP Act

Section 4 of the *FOIP Act* excludes certain categories of records from the terms and conditions of the Act. Some of these records categories are subject to the Records Management Regulation and some, relating to the Legislative Assembly Office or the Officers of the Legislature, are excluded from the Regulation.

Government organizations can impose access restrictions on records that are subject to the Records Management Regulation but exempt from the *FOIP Act* and that are scheduled for transfer to the Provincial Archives of Alberta in whole or in part. The Alberta Records Management Committee can approve these access restrictions, which will apply while the records are accessioned in the Provincial Archives.

It is the responsibility of the originating organization to specify the access restrictions on the schedule. This would be done by citing the appropriate sub-section and clause from Schedule 4 [e.g.,s4(1)d] in the FOIP Reference field on the schedule, placing an asterisk (*) beside the final disposition code on the final disposition field and then specifying the access restriction in the Records Series Title/Description field (e.g. access restricted to the

Deputy Minister and Director of Human Resources for 25 years from the date of accessioning in the Provincial Archives).

Records Subject to Section 5 of the FOIP Act

Section 5 states that "if a provision of this Act is inconsistent or in conflict with a provision of another enactment, the provision of this Act prevails unless (a) another Act, or (b) a regulation under this Act expressly provides that the other Act or regulation, or a provision of it, prevails despite the Act." The situation where another Act or regulation prevails over the *FOIP Act* is referred to as *paramountcy*.

Government organizations that are scheduling records series related to a case of paramountcy must cite this on the schedule. This would be done by citing Section 5 of the *FOIP Act* in the FOIP Reference field on the schedule and then by citing the specific paramountcy reference from the relevant legislation in the Legal Reference field on the schedule.

Personal Information

Personal information is defined in Section 1(1)(n) of the *FOIP Act*. It means information about an identifiable individual, including:

- the individual's name, home or business address or home or business telephone number;
- the individual's race, national or ethnic origin, colour or religious or political beliefs or associations;
- the individual's age, sex, marital status or family status;
- an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual;
- the individual's fingerprints, other biometric information, blood type, genetic information or inheritable characteristics;
- information about an individual's health and health care history, including information about a physical or mental disability;
- information about an individual's educational, financial, criminal or employment history, including criminal records where a pardon has been given;
- anyone else's opinions about the individual; and

- the individual's personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else.

Personal Information Banks

FOIP also involves the protection of privacy. Where personal information is being collected in a records series, this must be noted. This type of information is often referred to as a *Personal Information Bank (PIB)*. A PIB as defined in Section 87(5) is a "collection of personal information that is organized or retrievable by the name of an individual or by an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to an individual." PIB's should be identified on the records schedule.

Retention of Personal Information Used for Decisions

According to section 35(b) of the *FOIP Act*, where personal information is used to make a decision which directly affects the individual concerned, it must be retained for one year from the date of use. This may be beyond what otherwise might be its appropriate retention period. For example, if an individual applies for a grant and is rejected, the application should be retained for one year from the date of the rejection. This allows the individual time to access the information and correct it, if necessary. You must note where this may occur in a records series to ensure the information is retained as required and establish processes to ensure files are flagged for retention even though a schedule may permit final disposition.

Master/Copy/Duplicate Relationships

Masters, Copies and Duplicates

In order to assign a retention period to a records series, you must know whether the records series is the master version or a copy. Both masters and copies are records and must be designated on the schedule. The records values assigned to the master version of a records series are usually much greater than those assigned to copies. When we refer to masters and copies in the scheduling process, we are referring to records series. The term duplicate on the other hand, refers to individual documents which are usually transitory records.

Master

The master version of a records series is the main or most complete version and is held by the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR). The master version will be retained for the longest retention period. The term *master* does not mean the same thing as *original*. Whether or not a document is the original version is often not relevant in a modern office setting. An exception would be situations where original signatures are important.

Copy

A copy is a secondary version of a records series that is kept by a different program or service or within the same program or service for a different purpose than the master. Copies will often be organized differently and kept in a different format than the master. You will treat copies as records but you will usually assign shorter retention periods to them. The final disposition will usually be destroy.

Duplicate

A duplicate of a document is a version created from the original (or master) that has no substantive additions, changes or deletions and that has not been stored in a filing system or a directory structure. Duplicates usually are transitory records (see Transitory Records Schedules in Chapter 6).

Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)

The Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) is the unit in your organization that is the official custodian of a specific records series. Since the records in the records series maintained by the OPR are the main or most complete versions, normally they will be the master versions.

For example in Government Services, the Access and Privacy Branch is directly responsible for the government-wide Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy program and creates operational records related to the program.

Access and Privacy's records on FOIP would also be the most complete in Government Services. Other organizational units within Government Services will have received and filed information on the government-wide FOIP program but since they do not have primary responsibility for the program and their records are not as complete, their FOIP records series would be copies. The Deputy Minister is the executive responsible for FOIP and also has operational records on the subject but they are not as complete as the Access and Privacy Branch's records. However, the DM's records on the government-wide FOIP program might also be considered as masters since they document executive level decision making. Access and Privacy is the Office of Primary Responsibility for FOIP and has the master records series on FOIP for Government Services. Records series which relate directly to the mandate of the program or service and are maintained by the program or service are almost always master versions.

In situations where most of the records series of an organization are centralized in a central records office, those records series would normally all be considered as masters unless operational circumstances dictated otherwise. The Office of Primary Responsibility would be the organizational unit functionally responsible for the central records office. Secondary versions of records series maintained in the Central Records Office that existed in programs or services within the organization would be treated as copies if they were used for a different purpose and arranged in a different way. Records would be treated as duplicates if nothing substantive had been added, changed or deleted and if they were not filed in a records or information system. There may still be master versions of other records series in other parts of the organization that are not stored in the central records office.

Multiple Media

Increasingly, program and service staff are keeping records in more than one media due to the introduction of information technology. For example, imaged records are often created by scanning and digitizing existing paper records. This does not necessarily mean that the paper record is the master and the image is a copy. The reverse may be true. In order to distinguish between the master and the copy, review your interview notes and background information on the activities of the program or service. You can then determine which version of the record requires longer term retention. Legal restrictions and the longevity of the media used may also dictate this. For example, properly processed silver halide microfilm will last longer than the paper version from which it is created.

In certain circumstances when you are converting from one media to another (eg. a paper transcript of an audiotape of a meeting or a public hearing), information may be lost. An audiotape converted to a transcript may lose the information provided by the inflexion of a persons' voice. This would influence the choice of which version was to be designated as the master. When dealing with multiple media, consider the admissibility of the records as evidence in court. If the original paper document exists, it must be produced in court. If, however, the original paper document was destroyed under controlled circumstances as part of the normal business process, then the imaged document is admissible.

More information on the standards for admissibility of imaged records in court is available in the *Microfilm and Electronic Images as Documentary Evidence* standard published by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB). Another CGSB standard to reference is the forthcoming *Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence*.

Electronic and Paper Versions

Most of the records that programs/services create will be in electronic form and saved in directories. These electronic records may be printed and filed, although this is becoming less true as technology advances. In these cases, the electronic record is considered to be a draft and therefore a transitory record.

In paper files, you will find printed versions of records that were created electronically, interfiled with paper documents that were received from outside the program or service. In directories, you will find electronic versions of documents that have been created, but few, if any, documents received from outside the program or service. One exception may be electronic mail records or electronic faxes. Paper files, therefore are often the most complete collection of information on each subject. Where this is the case, treat the paper files as the master and the electronic directories as duplicates. This will not always be the case, however, as some programs or services are moving toward a paperless environment. There will also likely be situations where the master records series includes both paper, electronic and other media.

Security Back Up

Security back up versions are treated as copies as opposed to duplicates. They should not be treated as transitory records because they are stored in a separate information system and for a different purpose.

Application Systems

Identifying master/copy/duplicate relationships is more complex when you are scheduling large databases or application systems. You need to compare the information stored on the database with the information stored on paper. For example, paper input forms that are completed manually and entered into a database may be copies if all of the information on the input forms is entered into the database and the forms are not filed in a records series such as client files. In this case the database is the master. However, if the forms have signatures on them, then the paper forms should be treated as masters as well. Also if some of the information is not entered into the database, then the paper forms would be considered as masters. Reports printed from a database may be considered copies, if the reports can be generated again at any time during its required life span. If, however the information in the database is deleted at the end of the fiscal year or other period and reports cannot be recreated, then the paper reports will be masters.

Most application systems have procedures in place to copy the information onto magnetic tape or disk. These copies, often referred to as backups, contain information as it exists at a specific point in time.

Longevity of Media

When the same information is stored in more than one media, consider how permanent each of the media are. The program or service will normally store the master version much longer than the copies, so it must have the longevity to survive the longer retention period you will assign it. Ensure that hardware and software needed to use information in electronic media will exist for the retention period you will assign to the master. Electronic media such as diskettes, tapes, data cartridges and optical disks have a limited lifespan and may need regular maintenance to ensure that the information is retrievable. Master versions of records series with a lengthy retention periods that are in an electronic format may need to be periodically converted to more stable long-term media to ensure the integrity of the information. Properly processed microfilm has a greater longevity than most common paper. Acid free paper is another alternative to extend the longevity of records, especially those records that require a lengthy retention period in a paper format.

Legal Considerations

Where records have legal implications, it may be important to retain the paper version, even if the program or service staff do not refer to it. For example, an original signature may have legal value, even where an image can provide a true copy of the signature. It may also be important to show that the record has not been altered, especially with electronic records. Some applications control these issues by things like electronic signatures and access controls but older applications often do not. Assess these issues carefully for each component of the system.

Data Extraction and Manipulation

Information may flow from one application system to another or from an application system to an office automation tool such as word processing report, a user defined database or a spreadsheet. Staff may then change the information in some way. If the information remains unchanged, treat it as a copy. If the information changes, the new version of the information is a master version of a new record. The user defined database or spreadsheet may also print reports, which creates a new generation of multiple media relationships. These must also be considered.

Application Systems as Indexes

Sometimes staff use an application system as an index to their paper or micrographic files. For example, a client database may provide the index for a set of paper case files relating to the same clients. The program or service will need the database information to retrieve the paper files either within the organization or from the records centre. The retention period for the database must be the same as the retention period for the files in that case.

Master/Copy

Records are often created in one program or service and then distributed to other areas within the same organization. Usually, the originating area's version of the records would be considered as the master and all other versions would be treated as copies. If the records are received for reference purposes only and are not filed, they could be treated as duplicates and disposed of as transitory records.

Master/Copy Relationships With Other Government Organizations

Some records are created in one organization and distributed to other organizations across government. Usually, each organization, other than the originator, that received these records would treat them as a master for that organization rather than as a copy. These records probably would not need to be kept as long as the originator's version however, which are actually the "government master." Receiving organizations would have to assess the value of the records like any others for retention/disposition purposes but they should contact the originating organization to determine what the retention period and final disposition is for copies of the particular records series.

Assessing the Value of Records

Introduction

Once you have identified, organized and documented the operational records series, you need to determine their value. Records will have primary and possibly secondary values which will affect the length of time they need to be kept. The records values will also determine the final disposition of the records when they have reached the end of their retention period.

The results of the interviews should have identified how long the program or service needs the records for their operations. The Provincial Archives will also be involved in determining records' values as they are responsible for identifying records that have enduring value for the Government and people of Alberta.

Assessing the Value of Records

The value of a record determines the length of its retention and its final disposition. If records still have value, they should not be destroyed. Only records that have no further value should be destroyed.

In cooperation with the staff of the program or service and in consultation with an archivist from the Provincial Archives, determine the value of the records to the organization and to the government. The archivist is responsible for identifying records of enduring value for the people of Alberta and conducting a formal archival appraisal of the records.

Documenting Values

There are several categories of records values to consider in your analysis. Identify each possible government or public user of the records (especially in the case of Personal

Information Banks) and how they use them or will use them in the future. The Government Records Archivist responsible for your organization can help you identify other potential users for the records.

You can only assign a retention period to a records series after you have taken all of these values into account and confirmed them through feedback discussions. Most records series have more than one type of value.

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Records Values

Records can have *administrative, financial, scientific/technical, legal, evidential or informational value.* That value can be a *primary* value which means the records are needed for carrying out the current operations of the organization. These values can also extend for a long time after the records are no longer needed to support the operations of the organization. These records have *secondary* values. A secondary value may also be the value records have to organizations other than the creating agency. Consult a Government Records Archivist about secondary values.

Administrative Value

Administrative value (sometimes also referred to as operational value) relates to the need to keep records to conduct the operations (ie. programs or services) of an organization. The policy, procedural, subject or case records an organization uses to meet its mandate all have administrative value.

You can best assess the administrative value of records from discussions with the staff who use them. Determine how long the records are kept currently, what the business rules of closure are, how active the records are after closure and for what purpose the records are being used when active and inactive.

Legal Value

Certain government records must be retained to protect the civic, legal, property and other rights of the Government of Alberta, individuals and society. Records with legal value document business transactions, provide proof of regulatory compliance or provide evidence that may be necessary in the event of court action.

Examples of documents with legal value include contracts, agreements, land titles which convey property rights, fixed asset documentation, birth certificates which convey citizenship rights, etc.

Assessing the legal value of records can be complicated. You must do more than merely read the legislation that governs the program or service. There are many Canadian and Alberta statutes and regulations, which govern the retention of records and/or the limitation of actions. Only a small percentage will apply to the records retained by the program or service you are scheduling. However, you may need to review the statutes and regulations of both Canada and Alberta for possible legislative requirements. Since doing legal research can be complex, your legal counsel should be requested to assist you for certain schedules.

Aboriginal Issues

There are five major issues that relate to Aboriginal peoples and their rights that you should be aware of when scheduling records. These are:

- aboriginal title;
- land claims;
- treaty and aboriginal rights;
- court challenges under Section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms;* and
- the inherent right to self government.

Aboriginal Title

Aboriginal title is based on the fact that aboriginal peoples were here first and have rights to the land that were recognized by the British Crown. *The Royal Proclamation of 1763* which decreed that only the Crown could buy aboriginal land, laid the foundation for the legal doctrine on aboriginal issues. The concept of aboriginal title is central to the issue of land claims.

Land Claims

There are two types of land claims that apply to Alberta. These are *land entitlement claims* and *specific claims.* In Alberta, aboriginal title was extinguished by the signing of treaties in the 19th century. The treaties entitled every member of a band or family to land. Because some people were missed during the head counts for the administration of the treaties, land entitlement claims have resulted. Under the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* of

1930, the Province has a constitutional obligation to provide unoccupied crown lands when unsatisfied land claims are settled.

Specific claims result from alleged mismanagement of Indian lands by the Federal Government. The Federal Government has a fiduciary (trusteeship) relationship with Indian people. Indian land can only be sold with the approval of the Federal Government. The *Indian Act* made the Federal Government responsible for Indian land. Indian people do not own reserve land, it is held in trust for them by the Federal Government. A land surrender process exists under the *Indian Act* whereby land can be taken out of reserve status. From 1876 on, the Federal Government allegedly mismanaged the surrender process. As a result, many First Nations are now using specific land claims to try and get their land back. The land in question may be provincially administered crown land or privately owned land. First Nations prefer to receive land in compensation but are willing to accept monetary compensation to give up their interest in land.

The *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* of 1930 gave the Government of Alberta control over crown lands in Alberta, including surface and mineral rights. Because these crown lands could be the subject of land claims, government organizations concerned with crown land need to be aware of land claim issues.

Treaty and Aboriginal Rights

The treaties signed between the Crown and the First Nations are protected in the *Constitution Act* of 1982. Section 35 affirms treaties and aboriginal rights and has consequences for governments. The Provincial Government is not responsible for fulfilling treaty rights but it does have an obligation not to infringe upon them. The Provincial Government can, however, impede treaty rights like hunting, fishing and trapping. Whether this is legal or not is the subject of a test. The impediment of treaty rights must be shown to have been the result of a valid public objective and the groups in question must be shown to have been consulted. If the requirements of the test are not met, the particular enactment could be struck down by the courts. This is where records are of extreme importance to the protection of the legal interests of the Government of Alberta, as they provide the documentary evidence necessary to fulfill the test.

Court Challenges Under Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Before the 1978 *Extension of Services to Indians Policy*, provincial government services were not extended to Indian people living on reserves. Section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees all Canadian citizens equal treatment under the law. Native groups are beginning to make Charter challenges under Section 15. Again, the documentary evidence in records becomes very important in defending the province's legal interests. There may be some defences against these challenges (e.g. that certain programs could not be applied to reserves). Claims that arise out of alleged discrimination in the delivery of provincial government services will have to be examined on a case-by-case basis.

The Inherent Right to Self Government

The issues of self-government are also central to an understanding of aboriginal issues. Aboriginal peoples believe that they have always had the right to self-government, that it is an inherent right. The Federal Government takes the position that Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* recognizes the inherent right to self-government. The Provincial Government may have violated this right in the past while exercising their control of local issues like health and education. Even though the infringement of rights may have occurred a long time ago, the right to sue still exists because there are no limitations of actions on constitutional matters or treaty rights. In order to defend itself, the Provincial Government must be able to produce documentary evidence in the form of records.

When government organizations are assessing the legal value of records they are scheduling, they must carefully consider the potential impact of aboriginal issues on these records. Aboriginal issues tend to be long-standing, historical, inter-jurisdictional, constitutional and interdepartmental in nature. They are high profile and sensitive and carry a high financial risk for the government.

Records are very important, in that they help to establish a defence for the government against claims. They document what rights are or are not and they provide evidence of actions government took to remedy problems. Documentary evidence is very important to the legal process.

Aboriginal issues will potentially affect records schedules. A good example is land records, especially those related to surrender of Indian Reserve lands and treaty land entitlements. Alberta Transportation for example, will have records related to roads that cross Indian Reserves or surrendered land. Government organizations will have to undertake a risk management assessment on where aboriginal law is going to determine the correct course of action when establishing retention periods. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development can provide guidance to government organizations on these matters. The first point of contact in Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development should be the Senior Records Officer.

Limitation Periods

Records must also be kept to satisfy limitation periods. A limitation period is the length of time after which a legal action cannot be brought before the courts. Limitation periods are important because they determine the length of time records must be kept to support court action. It is important to be familiar with the purpose, principles, and special circumstances that affect limitation periods and therefore records retention.

The Purpose of the Limitations Act

The purpose of *Limitations Act* is to encourage the timely resolution of legal disputes, and in so doing to strike a proper balance between the interests of potential claimants, potential defendants and society at large.

Potential claimants have an interest in obtaining a remedy for injury from legally wrongful conduct; potential defendants have an interest in being protected from endless claims; and society at large has an interest in providing remedies for injury resulting from wrongful conduct and an orderly and fair process for determining when it is appropriate to award remedies.

The defendant is entitled to a limitations defence when either the discovery limitation period or the ultimate limitation period expires, whichever occurs first. Immunity from liability is not conferred automatically. The defence must be pleaded by the defendant. A successful defence gives the defendant immunity from liability under the claim. A successful limitations defence, however, does not extinguish legal rights.

The Act speaks of:

- A "claim" (rather than a cause of action) to denote the substantive right that may entitle a person to receive a remedy in a civil proceeding before a court,
- A "claimant" (rather than a plaintiff or applicant) who seeks a "remedial order" in respect of a "claim",
- A "defendant" (which may include a third party) as the person against whom a remedial order is sought.
- The term “injury" as meaning personal injury, property damage, or economic loss and is used to describe the loss upon which a claim is based.

Basic Principles of the Limitations Act

The discovery rule has been applied to tort actions since a Supreme Court decision in the early ‘90’s, however actions in contract had to be brought within 6 years after the cause of action arose. The Limitations Act now does not distinguish between categories of actions.

The First Basic Principle Is Knowledge

The limitation period does not begin to run until the claimant knows of the claim, that is, until the claimant has "discovered" or "ought to have discovered"

- that the injury had occurred,
- that it was to some degree attributable to the conduct of the defendant, and
- that it was sufficiently serious to have warranted the commencement of a proceeding.

After discovery of the injury, the claimant has 2 years within which to seek redress in a civil judicial proceeding. This 2-year period constitutes the "discovery limitation period".

As to the first requirement, the discovery period will commence not at the time of the event, but at the time of discovery of the injury. Therefore, it may begin at different times for different injuries. It is possible that there will be separate claims based on different injuries arising from the same event. The discovery rule incorporates a constructive knowledge test that charges the claimant with knowledge of facts that, in the claimant's circumstances, he or she ought to have known.

As to the second requirement, the discovery period will not begin until the claimant first knew that his or her injury was to some degree attributable to the conduct of the defendant. In other words, the discovery period may begin at different times against different defendants.

As to the third requirement, the discovery period will not begin until the claimant first knew that his or her injury was sufficiently serious to have warranted bringing a proceeding, that is, there must be relatively serious harm. This criterion protects litigants from incurring unnecessary legal expenses, and from bringing unnecessary legal action.

This discovery rule invites the judge to put himself or herself in the claimant's shoes, to consider what knowledge the claimant had at the relevant time, and to make the cost-benefit analysis that would be reasonable for the actual claimant.

The discovery period does not begin to run until the claimant knew or should have known the three basic facts that trigger its operation. The claimant will be given 2 years after he or she discovers the injury to consult a lawyer, to investigate the law and facts, to conduct settlement negotiations with the defendant, and to bring an action if necessary.

The Second Basic Principle Is That A Conclusive Termination Date Be Provided

It incorporates the certainty of the fixed period and serves the interests of defendants by providing an absolute cut off date of 10 years within which the claimant must seek a remedial order. The 10-year period applies irrespective of whether the claimant has knowledge of the claim. This principle facilitates long term planning by persons subject to potential claims, and allows for the final disposition of records. As well, at a certain stage evidence and adjudication becomes defective because of the passage of time. This 10-year period constitutes the "ultimate limitation period".

Together these dual principles provide a fair balance between the interests of claimants and defendants, both individually and collectively, and satisfy the interests of society at large.

Special Circumstances

Special provisions in the *Limitations Act* modify the operation of the basic limitation periods in certain circumstances. For example, both the discovery limitation period and the ultimate limitation period are suspended during any period of time that the claimant was under disability. "Person under disability" means a minor who is not under the actual custody of a parent or guardian, a dependent adult pursuant to the *Dependent Adults Act*, or an adult who is unable to make reasonable judgments in respect of matters relating to the claim. As well, the ultimate limitation period is suspended during any period of time that the defendant fraudulently concealed the fact that the injury had occurred.

In the case of a claim or any number of claims based on any number of breaches of duty, resulting from a continuing course of conduct or a series of related acts or omissions, the ultimate period begins to run when, and not before, the conduct terminated or the last act or omission occurred.

Other Statutes

The *Limitations Act* defines many, but by no means all, of the limitations that apply to court actions. Limitations provisions in specialized statutes are exempted from the new *Limitations Act*. Many other acts and regulations define limitation periods of their own. There are also limitation provisions contained in various statutes of Alberta, the Alberta Rules of Court and relevant case law. For example, in the *Environmental Protection And Enhancement Act* a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench may extend a limitation period for the commencement of a civil proceeding where the basis for the proceeding is an alleged adverse effect resulting from the alleged release of a substance into the environment. The *Student Loan Act* provides that the 2-year limitation period in sections 2(2)(b) and 3(1)(a) of the *Limitations Act* is extended to 6 years.

The key to the Act is what it covers. Although it is generally comprehensive in its coverage, the scheme does not embody the entire limitations system.

Conduct legislative research and read through any statutes and regulations that may apply to the program or service to be scheduled to identify any applicable limitation periods.

Legislative Research Tools

Carswell publishes two valuable reference works to assist legislative researchers in terms of records retention. These are *Records Retention Law and Practice* and *Records Retention Statutes and Regulations*. These may be available from the Senior Records Officer or in your organization's library or you may view them in person at the Resource Centre of

Information Management Branch. Carswell has also published on CD-ROM, a product called *Filelaw*, used for conducting legislative research for records retention and disposition purposes.

Butterworth's publishes two useful limitations manuals which may assist in identifying acts with applicable limitation periods. These are the *Alberta Limitations Manual* and *Federal Limitation Periods: A Handbook of Limitation Periods and Other Statutory Time Periods*.

Consultation and Review with Legal Officers

Consult with your organization's legal advisors as part of your assessment of the legal value of records. However, do not expect legal staff to be aware of all of the legislative requirements. In order for the legal advisor to provide you with meaningful advice, you must have completed as much of the legislative research as possible yourself prior to discussions with legal staff.

Financial Value

Records having financial value relate to all financial transactions the organization is involved with. These may include budget records, expenditure files, accounting records, etc. Financial records are retained to demonstrate how money was obtained, distributed, controlled and spent. The government is responsible to taxpayers for the management of public funds. Financial records provide evidence to support this accountability.

Audits

Most financial records are subject to an audit. Normally audits take place less than 18 months after the end of a fiscal year but they are sometimes delayed. Also, records are often subject to management audits resulting from directives or internal policies that require a review of how well certain activities are managed. For example, the licensing or monitoring of businesses is often subject to management audits. So, the financial value of records goes beyond documenting transactions. It also involves ensuring that all of the records that auditors require to complete financial and management audits are available when needed.

Assessing Financial Value

Review each of the records series you have identified and determine what financial implications the series has. Records with financial implications include:

- records which document the collection, distribution, control or expenditure of public funds; and

- records subject to any form of financial or management audit.

Assessing Financial Value

Financial and legal values sometimes overlap. For example, the length of time financial records must be kept is often specified in legislation. Legislation also specifies the limitation period for many external audits.

Consultation and Review with Financial Officers

To properly assess the financial implications of records, you need to consult with financial officers. Financial officers will provide further insight into the need to retain various classes of financial records, the relationships between them and the audit value of various records series.

Scientific or Technical Value

Records having scientific or technical value contain information resulting from pure or applied scientific or technical research. Such records may require long retention periods within government organizations.

Appraisal of scientific and technical records requires more input from the people who created them than any other type of records. Only scientists or experts working in a particular technical field have a detailed understanding of the importance of these records. However, records management staff should point out the cost implications of retaining such records for long periods of time as well as the potential for deterioration of records stored using an appropriate medium.

Archival Records

The role the Provincial Archives plays as the archives for the government is to maintain those records of long term value to the government but which are not needed to undertake the current operations of government. The Provincial Archives manages these records on behalf of the government ensuring that they are preserved, maintained, and accessible.

To identify archival records, the archivist looks at records to determine their evidential and informational value.

Evidential Value

Records have evidential value when they document the evolution of the powers, organizational structure, programs, policies, procedures, decisions and functions of the organization.

Records with evidential value include those records of long term administrative, financial, scientific, or legal value for the creating organization because these records serve as evidence of the organization, functions, and operations of the organization.

Records contain evidential values when they show what the organization's responsibilities were and how it carried them out. Records with evidential value show organizational structure, policies that were followed and the reason these policies were developed. Because these types of records are concerned with policies and procedures, usually records created by the senior management of the organization are of more value than those created by offices lower down in the organizational structure. However, this does depend on the organization, delegation of authority, reporting and records systems. Records created at the operating level usually are not related to the development of policy, but are usually housekeeping records, routine correspondence or case files. Case files can be archival records if they possess evidential or informational value.

Informational Value

Informational value relates to the information records may contain on persons, places, events, problems, subjects, and conditions that the organization dealt with. This value is concerned solely with information contained in the records, not with the source (e.g. the organization which created the information).

All records contain information, so the archivist looks at different criteria to establish the informational value of records.

- *Uniqueness of the record*

  Can the same information be found elsewhere in as useable a form?

- *Form*

  This concerns the degree to which information is concentrated within the record and the use of and ease of access to the information.

- *Life Span*

  Does the information cover a long enough time period so that research can be undertaken on the records?

- *Sparseness of data/age of records*

  In Alberta, records created before 1905 are rare so most are kept.

Research Use

Records which have evidential or informational value have archival value and are useful for research by a variety of users. These include the creating agency, the government, historians, environmental researchers, sociologists, political scientists, students, genealogists, etc.

Consultation with Archivist

To properly assess the value of records, you need to discuss it with the Government Records Archivist responsible for your organization. (If you do not know who this is, contact the Provincial Archives at (780) 427-1750). The archivist will provide further insight into the values discussed above and the relationships among various types of records. Preliminary contact will also give the archivist some understanding of the kinds of records series involved and the complexity of the schedule itself.

Assigning Time Periods to Records Values

Although the value of some records will last forever, most records decline in value as time passes. Your final step when considering all of the above values is to try to assign periods of years to them. These will then be used in the next step in the process, which is to establish the retention periods for each records series you have identified.

Determining Closure Criteria, Retention Periods and Final Disposition

Introduction

Having completed a thorough analysis of records values, you can now determine the closure criteria and assign retention periods to each records series. When determining retention periods, follow the philosophy of assigning the minimum amount of time possible while meeting operational requirements.

On-Site Retention Periods

If necessary, divide the retention period for each records series into two parts. Determine the length of time records must be kept on-site in the organization after they are closed, and if required, the length of time they need to be kept off-site at the Alberta Records Centre (ARC) or in a commercial records centre, if ARC facilities are not used. Retention period decisions made by organizations are subject to the approval of the Alberta Records Management Committee in the schedule approval process.

Existing Schedules

Existing schedules may contain information that will be helpful in assigning retention periods. However, treat existing retention periods with caution. The relevance and appropriateness of existing schedules may vary considerably.

Closure Dates

The on-site and off-site retention periods you assign to each records series must have a defined start date in order to be practical to apply. Retention periods begin from the time program or service staff close the records. The most commonly used closure dates for subject records are the end of the calendar year and the end of the fiscal year. Wherever possible, closure dates should be based on one of the two year ends. There are potentially other year ends that could be used as well, such as school year ends and corporation year ends. This does not mean that all subject records would be automatically closed at the year end. It merely means that for any subject records closed during the year, the retention periods would be calculated from the year end.

Special Closure Criteria

Year end closure dates are not appropriate for all records. Many case records are closed when the matter to which the case relates is completed. The retention period you assign to some records may have to be based on a future event, such as the graduation of a student, the settlement of a law suit or the completion of a contract. Policies and procedures are often closed when they are superseded or obsolete. Apply these types of closure criteria to case records when necessary.

Logical and Practical Closure Criteria

In order for it to be logical and practical, the closure criteria you choose must be something that staff will be aware of in the future. For example, if the closure criteria is the settlement of a law suit, you must be confident that staff expected to close the files will be aware that the law suit is settled. If this is not the case, it is better to choose a closure criteria that will be known to staff or to assign a specific number of years after the end of the current calendar or fiscal year.

Organization Retention Period

Records must be kept on-site in an organization after closure if they have any residual primary value to the organization. The most important factor to consider when determining the organization retention period is the reference rate. As a rule, if staff will be retrieving records more than once per month, the organization should keep them on-site. If space is an issue, the organization may be able to provide an on-site centralized semi-active storage facility. On-site semi-active retention is referred to as the organization retention period.

Semi-Active Storage

Some organizations may choose to divide the organization retention periods into more than one phase. The records may remain with the program or service in active storage for a short period of time and then be transferred to semi-active storage within the organization. There is no need to indicate the semi-active retention periods separately on the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. It should be included in the organization retention. You may wish to note the semi-active retention periods for your own use.

Permanent Retention in Organization

Some records series such as land title records have permanent value to their creating organization regardless of their age or volume, and must be kept permanently in the custody and control of the organization. This is unusual however. You should avoid permanent retention periods wherever possible, especially in cases where the users cannot decide what the retention periods or final disposition should be. There should be some form of justification for permanent retention, such as a legal requirement. This must be documented on the schedule.

Balancing Storage and Retrieval Costs

Storing records that have little or no reference activity in active or semi-active storage areas in offices is not cost effective. However, it is also costly to continually retrieve active records from the Alberta Records Centre. To determine a practical organization retention period, balance the storage and retrieval costs involved and ensure that the records will be accessible to users when needed.

Determining the Total Retention Period

When considering the values of a record series you will often find that the amount of time that the records series has primary values will exceed the length of time the records need to be kept on-site in the organization. The total retention period for a records series is determined by its lengthiest value. One type of value does not outweigh another. Records are retained as long as they have value of any kind.

Masters and Copies

The total retention period usually applies only to the master version of the records. Copies need only be kept for the length of time for which they have administrative value for program or service staff. Copies normally have a much shorter retention period than masters. As a rule, you should not recommend the transfer of copies to the Alberta Records Centre.

ARC Retention Period

The difference between the total retention period and the on-site or organizational retention period is the off-site or Alberta Records Centre retention period. It is less expensive to store records at the Alberta Records Centre or a commercial records centre, but it is costly to retrieve them frequently. So, it is important that records transferred to ARC are truly inactive (i.e. they have no little or no reference activity). The minimum retention period for records transferred to ARC is one year. The records will remain under the custody and control of the organization but the Alberta Records Centre will store them on its behalf. They can be retrieved from the Alberta Records Centre occasionally if they are required.

Final Disposition

Once you have determined the retention period for a records series, you must also determine what will happen to the records when they reach the end of their retention period. This action is known as the final disposition.

Destruction

The vast majority of records are destroyed at the end of their retention period. The Alberta Records Centre facilitates secure destruction of most of these records. Approximately 8 % of all records created will be transferred to the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Archival Retention

Records of enduring value to the Government and people of Alberta are transferred to the Provincial Archives of Alberta after their retention period expires. Three options for archival transfer have been used over the years:

- *Full Retention by Provincial Archives*

  In some records series, every record has evidential, historical, or informational value and must be retained permanently by the archives. Some record series must be kept in their entirety for the Government to meet ongoing legal, fiscal or administrative requirements.

- Selective Retention by Provincial Archives

In some records series, certain records have archival value, but not all. The Provincial Archives will select those records. The remaining records will be destroyed.

[Note: Selective retention is no longer being used on new schedules.]

- Retention of Specimens by Provincial Archives

  In some records series, such as case files series, the Archives may obtain only a sample of the records series rather than retain the whole series

  [Note: Specimens is no longer being used on new schedules.]

Decision on Final Disposition

Organizations only recommend the final disposition for records series based on the analysis of records values. The final decision rests with the Alberta Records Management Committee based upon a formal archival appraisal.

Archival Appraisal

A formal archival appraisal of the records to determine the final disposition, will be conducted by the Government Records Archivist assigned to your organization. The archival appraisal must be included with the schedule when it is submitted for final approval to the Secretary of the Alberta Records Management Committee. For more details about the archival appraisal contact the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Alienation

Another possible final disposition action is alienation. Alienation is the transfer of the ownership, control and custody of records to a non-government organization. Details on the alienation of records can be found in Chapter 12.

Review

In rare cases, the ARMC may be unable to make a decision on the final disposition or there may be uncertainty about future events that could potentially influence the final disposition of a records series. In these instances, the ARMC may request a review of the final disposition after a certain period of time. The schedule will then be brought forward (BF'ed) for further review/revision at the defined time period.

8.
Developing One-Time Schedules

Introduction

A one-time schedule is a schedule that is intended to be used only once to dispose of records that are no longer current or relevant to existing programs and services and that are no longer being created. One-time schedules should be used in exceptional circumstances only.

There will still be situations where you will need to create a one-time schedule to dispose of records that do not functionally belong in the program or service or that relate to programs or services that are now defunct.

This chapter explains and provides guidance on:

- how to identify which records series should be scheduled using a one-time schedule;
- the characteristics of a one-time schedule;
- how to organize and document the records series;
- how to identify Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy references or Personal Information Banks; and
- how to determine retention periods and final disposition for records series.

When is a One-Time Schedule Appropriate?

There are specific circumstances when a one-time schedule would be appropriate:

- When records were created under a specific program or service that has been discontinued. As part of the government restructuring, many programs and services have been terminated. The records that belonged to these programs and services should be scheduled on a one-time schedule. This would also apply for programs and services that will be closing in the very near future (in less than one year's time) and where you know the closing date.

- When there are inactive records that will not be converted to a new records classification structure. If you are converting your records to a new structure, you may have a situation where you have inactive records that go back many years and there is no benefit to converting the records as they have outlived their primary value. Also, it would probably take a lot of resources to convert these inactive records to the new structure. Using your old system, you can develop a one-time schedule to dispose of these records.

- When there are records that are being alienated or transferred to another organization such as another provincial government organization, a municipal government, the federal government or the private sector. With government restructuring, functions your organization used to perform may now be the responsibility of a non-government organization. You will have to identify the records that are affected and transfer them to the appropriate organization using a one-time schedule. For more information, See Chapter 12 (Records Alienation and Transfer) of this publication.

There may be other reasons why you would need to use a one-time schedule rather than including certain records series in a continuing schedule. You may have records that exist in a format which your organization has discontinued using. For example, you may have some records series that used paper to capture the information up until two years ago when the process was converted to an electronic database. Paper is no longer being used to capture the information. When scheduling this records series, the paper records would be scheduled on a one-time schedule as the records are not being created in this format any more. The records on the electronic database, however, would be scheduled as part of a continuing schedule.

The general rule is that a one-time schedule should be used for records that are no longer being created or that will not be after a pre-determined date that is not too far in the future. If you are unsure about whether you should be developing a one-time or continuing schedule, contact the Information Management Branch for assistance and clarification.

Characteristics of One-Time Schedules

The format of a one-time schedule is the same as a continuing schedule. There are however, certain characteristics that are associated with one-time schedules which include:

- In situations where program/services are defunct and the records are no longer being created or used, most records series would likely not have or require a special closure criteria such as "Superseded or Obsolete" or "When the Program Ends." This is because the closure event will have already occurred.

You may find that under certain limited circumstances, you will need to use a special closure criteria. For example, if you are developing a one-time schedule for a loan program that will end in 6 months, you may use a closure criteria for the case files such as, "once funds have been repaid".

- Records series will have a date range with a beginning and ending date.
- The retention period of the records series will be calculated starting from the closure date of the records. If you have records that have fully met all primary values, no further retention would be required and the records could go immediately for final disposition. Those records with enduring value would be transferred to the Provincial Archives.
- One-time schedules are typically used only once and automatically lapse one calendar year after the date on which they were approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee or sixty days after the final disposition (destruction or transfer to the Archives) is to take place, if the final disposition is more than one calendar year from when the schedule was approved.

Steps in Creating a One-Time Schedule

Once you have identified that you need to develop a one-time schedule, you will have to collect, organize and document the data on the schedule. This may not be easy because you may find that you are dealing with inactive records that no one knows anything about. The staff that created or were involved with these records may have left your organization.

The process you must go through in developing a one-time schedule is the same as developing a continuing schedule. However, you may not have to describe the records series in as much detail. The steps you should go through are:

- Data Collection and Identifying the Records Series;
- Organizing and Documenting Records Series including identifying Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy references; and
- Determining Retention Periods and Final Disposition.

Data Collection/ Identification of Records Series

During the data collection and the records series identification steps, you would have identified the records series as being inactive. Additional analysis may be required to determine the types of records that are included in the inactive series. You will have to review the interview data to identify why these records were created, what function they supported, and why the records are no longer being created.

You may have to go back to the users to get answers to some of these questions. If there are no users who know about these inactive records, then you will have to go through the records and try to extract information from them.

Organizing and Documenting Records Series

When developing a one-time schedule, you would generally follow the same steps for organizing records series as you would for continuing schedules, although you may be able to organize the records series at a high level into the following categories: policy files, routing subject files and case files. You will have to review the legislation under which these records were initially created to determine if there is any requirement for keeping the records for an extended period of time.

Even though the records you are dealing with may be inactive and no longer created by your organization, they will still be subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation. Any Personnel Information Banks (PIBs) will have to be identified.

If you have a number of unrelated inactive records series or if you have inactive records from several defunct programs, you can probably document them together on one schedule. You would not, however mix records that are being alienated with inactive records for which your organization is the custodian. You will have to provide a brief description of the contents of the records. You do not have to go into as much detail if you were documenting the records series for a continuing schedule.

Retention Periods and Final Disposition

The retention periods and final disposition of these inactive records will be determined by their value. The legal research that you did during the analysis phase will assist in establishing retention periods. When calculating the retention period, remember the number of years is calculated from the closure date of the records.

Depending on the age of the records, they will probably not have any primary value but they may have some secondary value. As with continuing schedules, you will have to contact the Provincial Archives of Alberta to have an archival appraisal done. The archivist will be able to determine if the records have any enduring value.

The archivist will also designate the records they want to keep. The rest of the records would have a final disposition of destroy.

9.
Preparing and Submitting the Schedule

Introduction

Once you have identified, organized and documented the records series you can prepare and submit the schedule using the Records Scheduling System (RSS). This chapter provides assistance in preparing and submitting schedules.

Preparing the Draft Schedule

The first step in formally preparing a schedule is to prepare a draft for review and discussion by program or service staff. The records schedule consists of four parts:

- organizational information, program/service information and organizational approvals;
- opinions that were obtained to clarify the schedule and/or records series;
- records series details, and
- the archival appraisal.

These parts are completed using the Records Scheduling System (RSS). RSS allows records management staff to electronically create, edit, request review/opinion feedback, request an archival appraisal, obtain departmental signatures and request approval from the Alberta Records Management Committee.

The IMB publication *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual* provides detailed instructions on how to use RSS to perform these functions. A model schedule is included in Chapter 10. Additional guidance is also available in the Checklist in Appendix 1.

Gathering and Incorporating Feedback

Program/Service Feedback

It is important to vet the draft schedule with the program or service before submitting it for review or approval. Conduct feedback sessions with all staff who were interviewed during the data collection stage. Coordinate the sessions with the Senior Program Manager and any applicable line managers. Schedule the sessions as conveniently as possible for the users and confirm the time and place, in writing or by telephone. If the users are not using RSS, send them copies of the draft schedule ahead of time so they can review it before the meeting.

Topics to Cover

Ensure that all users understand that the purpose for the sessions is to discuss the draft records schedule and provide feedback on it. They should understand this feedback will be incorporated into the final schedule, wherever possible. Encourage users to provide their opinions on retention periods. It is your job to facilitate these decisions by providing guidance and advice.

All aspects of the draft schedule should be reviewed, including:

- the records series and their arrangement;
- records series descriptors;
- the various media identified;
- legal references;
- FOIP references;
- closure criteria;
- retention periods; and
- recommended final disposition.

Conducting Sessions

Be impartial during the sessions. If staff do not accept the draft schedule, it is unlikely they will take much interest in implementing it once it has been approved.

Preparation is key to the success of these sessions. It is important to understand the purpose and value of all records series and how the records are used by staff.

To prepare, review the project documentation, particularly the data collection forms and research notes. Try to anticipate where problems may occur and prepare information to assist in negotiating the decisions on the draft schedule.

Sessions should be as informal as possible. Be brief but give all users an opportunity to comment. Record the feedback provided for later analysis. Where appropriate, incorporate feedback in the final records schedule.

Negotiation

Negotiating the final retention period may be difficult. You will likely have to deal with users who wish to retain information longer than its value warrants. Your negotiating skills and preparation will be required here.

It is easiest to present each records series separately. Describe each series, its relative values, any additional factors surrounding disposition and the specific proposed retention period.

All negotiation is a process of give and take. You are setting the baseline for discussion. You will normally propose a retention period that accommodates the records values (administrative, legal, fiscal, historical, research, evidential and scientific/technical).

Users may wish to increase or decrease the proposed retention periods or may disagree among themselves. They will want to be assured that their needs for the information are considered. Discuss all reasons for modifying the retention period.

Your task is to negotiate an acceptable retention period. Present your reasons in support of the proposed period. Provide users with the records values met by the retention period. Detail the retrieval and storage cost implications of changing the period. However, your views should not interfere with the negotiating process. Advise them however that central agencies will be reviewing the schedules for the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC) and may request reconsideration of retention periods.

Base retention periods on user needs for prompt retrieval of inactive records. Ask users to provide evidence justifying their need for longer retention, such as reference requests over a particular time period.

Compromise

When necessary, compromise on a retention period. The new period may be longer than you believe is necessary. However, if the information risk is not excessive and the cost to the organization reasonable, the users should make the final decision. On the other hand, you should not compromise where the costs or risks to the organization are unreasonable or where legislation specifies a required retention period.

If you cannot reach a compromise on a retention period, consider having the program or another senior manager make the decision. That person can hear the reasons given on by both sides and then decide. You can also call upon Information Management Branch to assist you to further explain retention rationale and to possibly achieve consensus. Remember that the retention periods should be reviewed regularly. An overly lengthy retention agreed to now, may be easier to change later without harming the organization.

Final Disposition

Review the final disposition recommendation made in the draft schedule with the users. There are three options: full retention in the Archives, destruction, or alienation.

Users and records staff may recommend one of these final dispositions options, however an archivist will make the final recommendation based on an archival appraisal. The decision on final disposition rests with the ARMC. Users need to understand this.

Analysis and Screening

Once you complete the feedback sessions, review the information carefully. Incorporate any changes agreed to through negotiation. Analyze and screen user concerns and suggestions. Discard those without merit, but consider all reasonable and legitimate reasons for modifying retention periods. Balance these against your original reasons for assigning the retention periods. Where possible, incorporate the users wishes into the schedule.

Review by Senior Records Officer

If the Project Coordinator is not the Senior Records Officer (SRO), then, using RSS, the draft schedule should be referred to the SRO for his/her review and feedback. If the SRO suggests changes, the changes should be negotiated with the user.

Review by FOIP Coordinator

The draft schedule should also be referred to the FOIP Coordinator for review and feedback, especially of the FOIP citations. If the FOIP Coordinator suggests changes, the changes should be negotiated with the user.

Review by IMB

Once the internal reviews are completed, using RSS send the draft schedule to the Information Management Branch for initial review. IMB performs a secretariat function for the ARMC. Depending on the complexity of the schedule, IMB may provide feedback in a meeting, by telephone or in written form. The objective is to ensure that schedules meet established standards and that any specific concerns are resolved before the schedules are submitted to the ARMC for approval. This will reduce the frequency of schedules being deferred by the Committee.

Submitting the Draft Records Schedule for Review and Approval

Revising the Draft Schedule

Once you have collected the feedback and negotiated any changes with the program or service, you then revise the draft schedule accordingly. Detailed instruction for editing the schedule using RSS can be found in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual*.

Request Archival Appraisal by PAA

The next step is to request an archival appraisal of the draft schedule by the Provincial Archives. RSS will be used to request the archival appraisal and the Provincial Archives will subsequently complete the archival appraisal using RSS. This must be completed before the schedule can be submitted for approval by the ARMC.

Finalizing the Schedule

Signatures from the Senior Program Manager and Senior Records Officer must be added to the draft schedule. These signatures will be added electronically to the schedule using RSS. Detailed instructions for electronic signatures using RSS can be found in the *Records Scheduling System* (RSS) *Release 3.0 User Manual*.

Submitting Schedule to ARMC for Review and Approval

Once all information has been gathered and attached to the draft schedule, a request can be made to the ARMC for review and approval. RSS will be used to make the request.

An e-mail note will be sent to each member of the ARMC. Any additional information about the schedule that the Committee should be aware of in order to make its decision should be added to the e-mail note. An example of this would be emergency situations where schedules need to be dealt with expeditiously in order to accommodate program or office closures, or accidental destruction of records due to occurrences like fires, floods, infestations or contaminations. SROs should communicate such information to IMB as early as possible, so that the Secretary of the Committee can be briefed. SROs can also request to attend ARMC meetings to present and defend schedule submissions, if the schedules are complex.

Assigning Schedules to the ARMC Agenda

The Secretary of the ARMC will add schedules that meet quality control standards and are received by about 8 working days before the Committee meeting. Members of the ARMC may review the schedules before the agenda is prepared. There is the possibility that they may have concerns with a draft schedule. This could result in further consultations with SROs and possibly a delay in a schedule being placed on the agenda, if their concerns are not satisfied. Emergency schedules will be accepted past this deadline.

The ARMC generally meets on the last Tuesday of each month (except December) if there are schedules for review and will either approve or defer schedule or schedule amendment submissions.

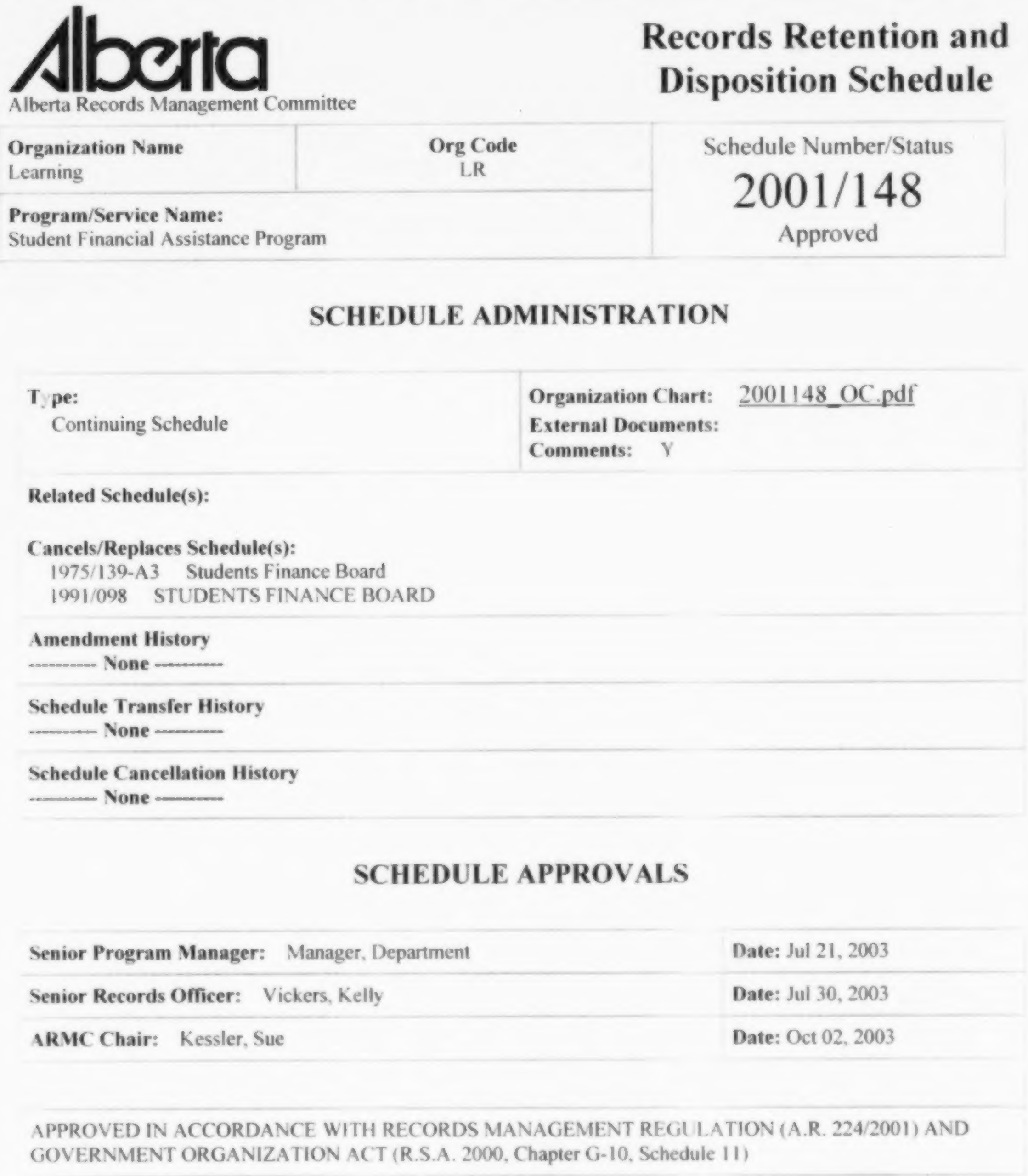
Notification of Approval

Within five working days of the ARMC meetings, the Secretary will notify Senior Records Officers of the decision on their submissions. This notification will explain any revisions that the ARMC requests be made to the schedules. The draft schedule in RSS will be updated to reflect the ARMC's action and any changes. The SRO will receive a signed original paper copy of the schedule that will be updated to reflect any revisions made by the ARMC.

If SROs do not agree with suggested revisions to schedules made by the ARMC, they should inform the Secretary in writing.

10. Sample Schedule

On the following pages is sample of a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.



Alberta
Alberta Records Management Committee

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

Organization Name Learning	**Org Code** LR	Schedule Number/Status 2001/148 Approved
Program/Service Name: Student Financial Assistance Program		

SCHEDULE ADMINISTRATION

Type: Continuing Schedule	**Organization Chart:** 2001148_OC.pdf **External Documents:** **Comments:** Y

Related Schedule(s):

Cancels/Replaces Schedule(s):
1975/139-A3 Students Finance Board
1991/098 STUDENTS FINANCE BOARD

Amendment History
---------- **None** ----------

Schedule Transfer History
---------- **None** ----------

Schedule Cancellation History
---------- **None** ----------

SCHEDULE APPROVALS

Senior Program Manager: Manager, Department	**Date:** Jul 21, 2003
Senior Records Officer: Vickers, Kelly	**Date:** Jul 30, 2003
ARMC Chair: Kessler, Sue	**Date:** Oct 02, 2003

APPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECORDS MANAGEMENT REGULATION (A.R. 224/2001) AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (R.S.A. 2000, Chapter G-10, Schedule 11)

PROGRAM/SERVICE INFORMATION

Purpose/Function

Learner Funding is responsible for processing and reviewing the eligibility of applications for financial assistance and ensures that award determinations are timely and accurate. Also ensures accountability for awards through liaison with stakeholders and partners and managing functions such as lender agreements, audit, budgeting and forecasting. Coordinates efforts with lending institutions and other partners to ensure loan administration and default management complies with current policies. This schedule covers the case file series only.

Brief History

The Student Assistance Board was established by authority of the Students Assistance Act, 1953 to administer the program of financial assistance to university students and student nurses provided in the act. In September 1959 the Student Assistance Board was designated as the appropriate authority to issue certificates of eligibility on behalf of the Canada Student Loans program. That same year, the Student Assistance Act was amended to allow for a broader range of funding to post-secondary students. In 1971, the name of the Board was changed to the Students Finance Board. The Board was given responsibility for the administration of provincial financial assistance to post-secondary students, including assistance issued through the Canada Student Loans program. In 1998, under the authority of the Student Finance Act and Student Loan Act the following changes were made:

> The Minister is responsible for the operation and administration of student financial assistance programs and the apportionment and distribution of student financial assistance in the Province of Alberta.
>
> The Student Finance Board advises the Minister on matters relating to student financial assistance. It also advises the Minister on scholarships under the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Act. The Board may also conduct investigations or research studies on issues relating to student financial assistance on the Minister's behalf.

Mandate/Legal Authority

Student Finance Act, Student Loan Act, Heritage Scholarship Act, Student Financial Assistance Regulation, Heritage Scholarship Regulation, Canada Student Loan Act, Canada Student Loan Regulation, Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, Canada Student Financial Assistance Regulation, Limitations Act and the Government Organization Act.

APPRAISAL

Archivist: (not on file)	
Manager, Government Records: Murdoch, Wayne	**Date:** Jul 14, 2003
Director, Provincial Archivist: Thomson, Sandra	**Date:** Jul 21, 2003

Organization Purpose:

Alberta Learning is the provincial government department responsible for the delivery of education programs and services for people of all ages. One of Alberta Learning's core businesses is to provide financial assistance to adult Albertans enrolled in approved educational institutions.

Business Function

The records addressed in this schedule document the Learner Assistance Branch. A core businesses of Learner Assistance Branch is to assist adult learners financially through scholarships, bursaries and loans. Within provincial and federal acts and regulations, the Learner Assistance Branch develops and administers programs and services to meet their core business. Learner Assistance ensures accountability for awards through cooperation with stakeholders and partners and by managing lender agreements, audit, budgeting and forecasting functions. The branch works with lending institutions and other partners to make sure loan administration and default management comply with current policies.

Comments
Special Preservation/Conservation Factors
Special Storage Requirements

OPINIONS

Opinion None requested
Aboriginal Opinion None requested
Financial Opinion None requested
FOIP Opinion None requested
IT Opinion None requested
Legal Opinion None requested

SCHEDULE ITEMS

01 Student Financial Assistance Files

Student assistance case file series contain original applications for student funding with supporting documentation such as written correspondence to and from the students. The files may also contain original statutory declarations; medical information such as doctors' letters; original or photocopies of receipts, photo copies of marriage certificates and other documents required to determine a students eligibility for loan and/or grant funding. Information Student assistance files consist of three types of loans: Guarantee Loan, Risk Share Loan and Direct Loan. This Case files series is filed by Social Insurance Number. Note: Applicant has ten years to repay the loan. If the loan has not been repaid by that time - see item #2 of this schedule.

PIB - Contains personal information relating to the student; such as name, Social Insurance Number, student I.D. number, address, phone number, birth date , gender, education and employment history, income of applicant, parents, sponsors, spouse, marital status, residency status, amount of grants and/or loans, bank where loan resides and medical certificate and transcript information.

Date Range: 1969 to Date

Media: Paper
Other:

Legal Reference:

FOIP Ref : PIB

Closure Criteria: Fiscal year end (Mar 31) Once loan has been repaid	**Retention On-site:** 2 Year(s)	**Retention Off-site:** 8 Year(s)
Concurrence Conditions: Providing no outstanding litigation	**Final Disposition:** Destroy	

Archival Appraisal:
RECOMMEND FINAL DISPOSITION OF DESTROY.
These are operational records of the business function of providing student loans to adult learners. Policy and procedure for obtaining student loans does not allow for interpretation of requirements. All applicants must meet the same requirements and, while the information contained in each student's case file is unique, the records document the routine process of processing student loans. These records consist of case files containing original applications, loan certificates and supporting documentation including correspondence, defaulted loan balances and/or grant funding overpayment details. Much like accounts payable and receivable, these records consist of routine operational files that have no long-term value.

Evidence of the business function of providing student loans will be better provided in the department's policy and procedure files. The Provincial Archives of Alberta should not acquire them.

Items to be cancelled:

1975/139-A3	1	Student Loan Files

02 Collection Files

Defaulted student financial assistance files contain original loan certificates and supporting documentation such as defaulted loan balances and/or grant funding overpayment details. The files are either in active collection or balances have been written-off if they are considered economically uncollectable, but in either case the debtor's liability to the Crown is not removed. This Case files series is filed by Social Insurance Number.

Note: If the student: a) pays off the the debt(s) to the crown; or b) has applied for further funding and met the default criteria, the file retention and disposition revert to item 1 of this schedule.

PIB - Contains personal information relating to the student; such as name, Social Insurance Number, student I.D. number, address, phone number, birth date, gender, education and employment history, income of applicant, parents, sponsors, spouse, marital status, residency status, amount of loans, bank where loan resides and medical certificate and transcript information.

Date Range: 1981 to Date

Media: Paper

Other:

Legal Reference:

FOIP Ref : PIB

Closure Criteria: After the student loan has been referred for collection or written-off	**Retention On-site:** 2 Year(s)	**Retention Off-site:** 80 Year(s)
Concurrence Conditions:	**Final Disposition:** Destroy	

Archival Appraisal:

R ECOMMEND FINAL DISPOSITION OF DESTROY.

As with the records found in item 01 above, these are operational records of the business function of providing student loans to adult learners. However, these case files document the unsuccessful attempts to have the learner repay their student loans. After ten years, if a loan is not repaid, the department retains the case file until such time as the loan is written off and the retention period of 82 years is met. Again, evidence of the business function of providing student loans will be better provided in the department's policy and procedure files. These records have no long-term value so the Provincial Archives of Alberta need not acquire them.

Items to be cancelled:

1991/098	1	Crown Debt Write-off Files

11.

Maintaining and Amending Schedules

Introduction

Records schedules are living documents that must be maintained and updated after they have been approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC). This chapter explains and provides guidance on how to:

- Manage your organization's records scheduling information.
- Deal with superseded and obsolete records schedules once they have been consolidated into program or service records schedules.
- Periodically review established records schedules in conjunction with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy program reviews.
- Prepare amendments to records schedules and get them approved, both within your organization and by the Alberta Records Management Committee.

Organization Schedule Management

Once the ARMC has approved a records schedule, the Senior Records Officer (SRO) is responsible for:

- setting up a file for the approved schedule;
- noting any cancellations on the files of previous records schedules (if applicable);
- distributing copies of the approved schedule to management.

Your organization can then start implementing the schedule.

SRO Central Files

It is the responsibility of every SRO to permanently preserve a master set of approved records schedules that apply to their organization. The SRO should separate active schedules from cancelled schedules for ease of use and maintain both a paper and electronic copy of the approved schedule. If the ARMC has made changes to the schedule, the ARMC Secretariat will incorporate the changes into the electronic version of the schedule.

The documentation gathered during the scheduling project will be scheduled according to Item # 0970 of ARDA. Important documents, such as data gathering forms, research notes and summary sheets should be kept for reference when schedules are reviewed.

Cancellation

SROs should use RSS to request ARMC to cancel superseded and obsolete schedules and remove them from the active records schedule file series. Details on schedule cancellation can be found in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual*. The SRO should also update Alberta Records Centre accession records when schedules are amended or cancelled. You can find more information on this in the Maintaining and Amending Schedules topic in this section.

Notify Users

The SRO should notify all staff on the project team of the schedule approval and of any amendments made by the ARMC. They may wish to review it and provide comments. The SRO should also notify and provide copies of the approved schedule to all users who will be affected by it. If the users are familiar with RSS, they can view the approved schedule electronically. The SRO should ensure they are familiar with the schedule and are able to implement the schedule as required. For complex schedules, the SRO should develop user guides to explain to users how to implement the schedules.

Distribute Copies

The SRO should give the program or service a copy of the schedule for their files. All line managers responsible for records covered by the approved schedule also receive a copy of the schedule. They will supervise the staff responsible for implementing the schedule. As such they have joint responsibility for its implementation. If your organization has an integrated subject classification and retention schedule manual, update and distribute the amendments as required.

Obsolete Schedules

Once the Alberta Records Management Committee approves a records schedule, you can implement it. However, you must also deal with any existing schedules that are now superseded or obsolete. Also, your organization must review and amend records schedules periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of your organization.

This scheduling methodology mainly deals with active records within a program or service. So far, we have not talked about records stored at the Alberta Records Centre, that programs or services no longer create. These may be covered under existing one-time or continuing schedules. The SRO now has to do the following tasks to deal with superseded or obsolete records schedules:

- Identify one-time schedules that have lapsed (ie. those covering records that have been disposed of, either by transfer to the archives or destruction).

- Review one-time schedules covering records at the Alberta Records Centre that have not yet been disposed of. These records are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and you must note whether any of them are Personal Information Banks or are covered by the exceptions to disclosure in the Act. Review the retention, disposition and access decisions made on the existing schedule.

If changes are required to those decisions, amend the one-time schedules and notify the Alberta Records Centre to change their accession records.

- Review continuing schedules, for items covering records at the Alberta Records Centre that are no longer being created within your organization. These records are also subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and you must note whether any of them are Personal Information Banks or are covered by the exceptions to disclosure in the Act. Review the retention, disposition and access decisions. If changes are required to those decisions, amend the continuing schedule and notify the Alberta Records Centre to change their accession records. These schedules will remain in force for those items not covered by the new schedule and can be cancelled once all of the items still covered by the old schedule have been disposed of.

Until all programs and services have been scheduled, you will not be able to determine which records series covered by existing continuing schedules are no longer being created. Wait until all the organization's records are scheduled before you establish which portions of existing continuing schedules can be cancelled. Where amendments have been made to existing one-time or continuing schedules, notify the Alberta Records Centre of any changes that would affect their accession records. This is explained below.

Superseded Schedules

The Alberta Records Centre accession records must be changed because existing schedules may have been superseded, in whole or in part, by a new schedule. To make the changes, send a memo to the Alberta Records Centre containing:

- the old schedule numbers affected by the new schedule or amendment;
- the item numbers in the old schedules that are affected by the new schedule or amendment;
- the changes being made to the retention period and final disposition for the item numbers affected in the old schedule; and
- the accession numbers affected.

Periodic Review

Organizations should review all approved records schedules within two years after the Alberta Records Management Committee approves them. The purpose of the review is to identify any changes required.

This may involve adding, deleting or changing records series as noted on the schedule. You may also have to reassess records values based on changing needs. For example, the legislation governing the records series may have changed.

Data Gathering for Periodic Reviews

The Senior Records Officer should have retained the data gathering notes from each scheduling project. Begin your review process by reading the notes retained from the original scheduling projects and any previous reviews.

Interviews

Meet with the program or service staff and determine the need for amendments. You need to know the following:

- Has the legislation, mandate, objectives, functions or delivery of the program or service changed?
- Has the organization or reporting relationships of the program or service changed?
- Have the records series retained by the program or service changed?
- Has there been major media changes?

Note any changes that program or service staff tell you about. Use them to update our records schedule as required.

Inventory

Confirm the existing records schedule against the records held by the program or service. Be sure to include records in all media, including imaged records, personal computer directories and application systems. Determine if any of the records series are no longer being created, have changed significantly or if there are any new records series not covered by the existing records schedule listing.

Note any changes that you discover from your inventory. Use them to update your records schedule as required.

Amendments to Existing Schedules

When an amendment to an existing schedule is proposed, Senior Records Officers and staff should review the existing schedule in the context of the entire program, service or function in question and seriously consider developing a new schedule. The ARMC will be flexible in approving amendments in situations that are genuine emergencies however.

Types of Amendments

There are two types of schedule amendments; major amendments and minor amendments.

Major Amendments

Major amendments must be approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee as a whole and include:

- increases or decreases to overall retention periods;

- changes to final disposition;
- addition of records series or significant changes to records series descriptions, or
- any other substantial changes to the information on the schedule.

Minor Amendments

Minor amendments are approved by the Secretary of the ARMC and include:

- date range changes;
- cancellation of records series or schedule items, when all related records have undergone Final Disposition;
- adjustments in on-site or off-site Retention Periods, without changing the total retention period, except increases in total Retention Periods to accommodate provisions of the *Limitations Act* (RSA 2000, Ch. L-12);

  NOTE: The provisions of the **Limitations Act** (RSA 2000 cL-12 s. 3(1)) could result in the need to increase retention periods on a number of records schedules. On June 5, 2001, the ARMC approved Amendment A010 to the Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA, schedule 1986/050) to take into account the impact of the *Limitations Act* on the retention of administrative records in the government. In SRO Circular 00/01-001 the ARMC noted that organizations which do not use ARDA and have administrative records schedules that apply only to their organizations should review the ARDA amendment, and amend their own schedules as soon as possible to remain consistent. The Secretary can approve amendments to increase overall retention periods for this reason as minor amendments.

- changing a Continuing Schedule to a One-Time Schedule;
- minor changes to Records Series or Item Descriptions;
- minor changes to Program/Service Name, Purpose/Function, and Brief History;
- other minor revisions to schedule text that does not alter the substance or intent of the content;

- changes to Item Numbers;
- changes to Legal References and FOIP References;
- removal of outdated Access Restrictions, after verification with the relevant FOIP Coordinator;

  NOTE: Access Restrictions were sometimes added to records series prior to 1995; however, the implementation of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act) superseded most pre-existing access limitations. Government organizations that update records schedules to remove outdated access restrictions may use the Process, as long as they first verify with the relevant FOIP Coordinator that removing the restrictions is appropriate. Situations in which access restrictions should NOT be deleted include: records that are not subject to the FOIP Act; and records that pertain to a paramountcy, where another piece of legislation is paramount over FOIP.

  NOTE: Record the verification of the FOIP Coordinator as a "FOIP Opinion". This can be entered either by the FOIP Coordinator, or by the schedule creator. In both cases, the name of the FOIP Coordinator and the date of verification are required (e.g. "Removal of Access Restriction from Item 16 verified by FOIP Coordinator, (Name) on (Date)

- addition or revision of Closure Criteria; or

  NOTE: Closure Criteria have not been captured consistently, especially in schedules completed before 1996. Often, some items on a schedule have closure criteria and others don't. Most criteria are straightforward, and RSS includes a pick list of frequently-used ones: Calendar year end (Dec. 31), Fiscal year end (Mar. 31), Superceded or Obsolete, "After verification of microfilm", "After audit is complete", "After all contract conditions are met", "After dispute resolution is complete", etc.

- formatting changes.

Other types of revisions to schedules are "major amendments" which must be brought to all members of the ARMC for review and approval.

Both major and minor amendments will require the submission of an updated schedule. Not all major amendments require modifications to the archival appraisal. Changes to final disposition or the addition of a new records series will require an update to the archival appraisal.

Amendments will result from changes to organizational programs and service delivery methods. It is important therefore, for Senior Records Officers to be aware of what is going on in their organizations.

Government organizations frequently need to make minor revisions to maintain the currency of records retention and disposition schedules. As the Secretariat for the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC), the Information Management Branch (IMB) is responsible for reviewing all minor amendments, and the Secretary of the ARMC is responsible for approving them.

To clarify and streamline the process, this chapter describes the review and approval process of minor amendments using the Records Scheduling System (RSS).

Schedule Review of Amendments

When IMB reviews minor amendments, the complete schedule is scanned, not just the specific amended items. The ARMC expects that ministries will proof-read the entire schedule and ensure that the points in **Column 1** below have been addressed before submitting the minor amendment to IMB for review, and then to the Secretary for approval.

However, when dealing with minor amendments, the ARMC does not require ministries to make changes that involve anything more than minor revisions. IMB reviews will not require organizations to add or update the points in **Column 2** below. However, these will need to be addressed when preparing major amendments and new schedules.

1 – Minor and Major Amendments	**2 – Major Amendments Only**
▪ Each amended item has a completed "Reason for Amendment" field. ▪ Program/Service Name is complete and correct. ▪ Date Range and Concurrence Conditions data are in the right fields. ▪ Correct Medium is shown for each item. ▪ "Leftover" bits of text in Item Description, Closure Criteria, Concurrence Conditions or	▪ Information about terminated or transferred programs in the History field, unless an update is needed to explain the minor amendment. ▪ Missing or outdated Purpose/Function or Brief History. ▪ Selective Retention, Specimens or other Final Dispositions that are no longer used. ▪ Lack of Closure Criteria. ▪ Missing or outdated Legal references or FOIP references. ▪ Generic Item Titles such as "Reports",

other fields are removed. ▪ Closure Criteria use the standard RSS pick list formats whenever possible. ▪ All retention fields include Units of Time, e.g. years, months, etc. ▪ Organization names in Purpose, History or Description fields are updated where appropriate. ▪ There are no changes to total retention except as in the Definition above. ▪ Each item has a Final Disposition. ▪ Comments, History or any other fields do not include references to cancellation of unrelated schedules. ▪ If other schedules are mentioned in the schedule or appraisal, they are included in the Schedule Relationships table. ▪ Related schedules that are referenced are included in the Related Schedules field. ▪ Typos and spelling errors are corrected.	"General", "Plans" that provide little information about the records. ▪ Item Numbers and collapsing "blank" items. ▪ Outdated or missing Item Descriptions. ▪ Obviously obsolete information, e.g. reference to retaining an AT computer and DOS to enable access to a system. ▪ Schedule Relationship fields (Supersedes, Is Superseded by, Is related to).

Procedures for Minor Amendments Using RSS

The procedures for minor amendments are different from those dealing with major amendments and new schedules.

1 IMB Review –

1.1. Once all the revisions have been made to the amended schedule, use RSS to forward the draft minor amendment to the Information Management Branch for feedback. Under "Schedule Actions" select "Request Feedback", then "Reviews", then "IMB".

1.2. IMB reviews the schedule and documents feedback to the ministry. When IMB marks the feedback as complete, an e-mail message to the schedule creator is generated automatically.

1.3. Based on the review, the ministry revises the schedule. If required, the IMB Review cycle could take place could take place more than once.

2 SRO Signature – Forward the schedule to the Senior Records Officer for electronic signature.

3 Secretary's Review and Approval

3.1. Forward the signed schedule to the ARMC Secretary only. Under "Schedule Actions" select "Request Feedback", then "ARMC Review", then select D. Smith, NOT any other ARMC member.

3.2. In the "Additional Notes", add the note "IMB review and requested changes are complete."

3.3. The Secretary reviews the schedule, and either:

- Approves the minor amendment, or
- Notes additional feedback or questions in the "Comments" field of the schedule, marks the "ARMC Review" as Complete, and sends an e-mail to the schedule creator to check the "Comments" field.

3.4 The creator responds in the "Comments" field using the following format:

"Name, Date – Responses to Secretary's questions/comments of (Date):…"

Record new comments at the beginning of the Comments field, above previous comments, so that the most recent information is on top. Separate comments by a ------ line.

[Note: This format is for clarity, as this field does not contain text-formatting features]

3.5 Once the question or issue is resolved, forward the schedule to the Secretary again for approval as in 3.1.

Completing the Amended Schedule

Once you have identified the amendments required, complete and submit the amended schedule for the Alberta Records Management Committee to approve. Detailed procedures for amending and submitting schedule amendments can be found in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 - User Manual*.

On the following pages is an example of an amendment to a records retention and disposition schedule. The key areas reflecting the amendments are shaded. Please note: A clearly stated reason for the amendment is required.

Alberta Records Management Committee

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

Organization Name Public Affairs Bureau	**Org Code** PB	Schedule Number/Status 2001/044-A001 Approved
Program/Service Name: Public Affairs Bureau		

SCHEDULE ADMINISTRATION

Type: Continuing Schedule	**Organization Chart:** **External Documents:** **Comments:** Y

Related Schedule(s):

Cancels/Replaces Schedule(s):

Amendment History

Number	Amendment to	Date Approved	Item(s)
A001(Minor)	2001/044	Aug 19, 2003	2.0

Reason for Amendment: This amendment removes the reference to "print" version of news releases and indexes for records scheduled after December 31, 2000.

Schedule Transfer History
---------- **None** ----------

Schedule Cancellation History
---------- **None** ----------

SCHEDULE APPROVALS

Senior Program Manager: Minor Amendment, SPM Signature not Required	**Date:** May 03, 2001
Senior Records Officer: Dougan, Elaine	**Date:** Mar 31, 2003
ARMC Chair: ARMC, Member-Sec.	**Date:** Aug 19, 2003

APPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECORDS MANAGEMENT REGULATION (A.R. 224/2001) AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (R.S.A. 2000, Chapter G-10, Schedule 11)

PROGRAM/SERVICE INFORMATION

Purpose/Function

The Public Affairs Bureau is responsible for coordinating cross-government communications, and seconding communications professionals to departments. The Bureau's functions consist of providing communications planning and consulting support to Ministries; providing specialized writing and editing services; operating the Regional Information Telephone Enquiries (RITE) system; publishing and selling Alberta legislation and government publications through Queen's Printer bookstores; consultation, guidance and coordination in the purchase of advertising, printing and graphic design services by departments; electronic media production and consultation; delivering government information to the public, including province-wide distribution of news releases to media, government and stakeholders through the Alberta Communications Network; development and maintenance of the Alberta Government Internet Home Page; and providing technical support for major government news conferences and announcements.

Brief History

The Public Affairs Bureau was established in 1972 by Don Getty to handle communications and public relations issues for government, under the direction of Executive Council. The following year, it was established as a separate entity, and took on the responsibility for Queen's Printer. In 1975/76, it became a division of Government Services, under Minister Horst Schmid, with responsibility for RITE. In 1984, the Bureau once again became a separate entity under Minister Bill Payne. From 1986 to 1992, Dave Russell, Doug Main, and Ken Kowalski, consecutively, were Ministers Responsible for PAB. In 1993, the Honourable Ralph Klein became Minister Responsible for the Public Affairs Bureau. **Initially, the Public Affairs Bureau consisted of two main operational divisions: Communications, which coordinated communications planning, research, media relations, and advertising for government; and Communications Production, which provided audio/visual, print and graphic design services and support to departments. In recent years, there has been a move towards reducing in-house production and contracting out services. The Bureau has now adopted chiefly a communications planning, coordinating, and consultative role, transferring much of the responsibility for communications development, production, and implementation to the departments. In the case of special, cross-government communications initiatives, the Bureau provides a central coordinating role. **The Alberta Communications Network (ACN) was established in 1972 as a joint venture of the Public Affairs Bureau and the Canada News Wire Service. The following year, it became a provincially-run operation of the Bureau. ACN has since evolved from a wire service to a fax distribution service using new technology to distribute news releases province-wide to media, government and stakeholders.

Mandate/Legal Authority

Order in Council 555/73Queen's Printer Act Queen's Printer Regulation

APPRAISAL

Archivist: (not on file)

Manager, Government Records: Murdoch, Wayne	**Date:** Mar 22, 2001
Director, Provincial Archivist: Thomson, Sandra	**Date:** Mar 22, 2001

Organization Purpose:

The Bureau supports the government in its ongoing dialogue with Albertans by coordinating and consulting on communications services for Government.

Business Function

This schedule covers records from two programs. The Communications Division seconds professional communications staff to ministries; provides expertise and consultation on ministry communications programs and plans; and coordinates and implements cross-government communications initiatives. The Alberta Communications Network distributes Alberta government news releases, Orders-in-Council and major announcements to media, government, interested stakeholders and the general public.

Comments

Special Preservation/Conservation Factors

Special Storage Requirements

Item 1.0 contains floppy disks, audio/video tapes, oversize items such as artwork and posters, and photographs and negatives.

OPINIONS

Opinion None requested
Aboriginal Opinion None requested
Financial Opinion None requested
FOIP Opinion None requested
IT Opinion None requested
Legal Opinion None requested

SCHEDULE ITEMS

1.0 Special Projects

Case files, set up alphabetically by project name, which cover the planning, development, coordination and delivery of government communications for cross-government initiatives; special events; large advertising, promotional or social marketing campaigns; major initiatives specific to a Ministry which require communications support from PAB; delivery of important government messages to, and feedback from, the public. Projects may be one-time or recurring (e.g. Premier's annual televised address). **Project files** may include records relating to any or all of the following: communications plans; media strategies; advertising or marketing strategies; print or media production; distribution via mail-outs, news releases, or media; website development; newsclips, media monitoring; MLA briefing materials; speeches and highlights; call centre operations.

Initiatives which include an advertising or marketing component may also include: advertising competitions; submissions; evaluations of agency proposals; agreements, contracts. Social marketing campaigns may also include: committee documents; reports, discussion papers; research on issues; surveys; focus group testing; public consultation (e.g. summits).

Date Range: 1972 to date

Media: Paper Electronic
Other: Floppy disks, audio/videotapes, presentation materials and displays; photographs and negatives; artwork, posters, graphic designs, promotional items.

Legal Reference:

FOIP Ref :

Closure Criteria: 2 years after project/contract completed	**Retention On-site:** 3 Year(s)	**Retention Off-site:** 5 Year(s)
Concurrence Conditions:	**Final Disposition:** Archives	

Archival Appraisal:
These files document the Bureau's communications projects for special events; large advertising, promotional and marketing campaigns; cross-government initiatives; and major initiatives in individual Ministries. These are the evidence of the Bureau's core responsibility for planning, developing, coordinating and delivering government communications. They are the most complete evidence of each project, containing planning and strategy materials, production work, distribution details, website information, media monitoring, briefing materials, speeches, advertising materials, committee records and so on. This item should be retained for the Provincial Archives to document this core Bureau responsibility.

Items to be cancelled:

None

2.0 * ACN News Releases

Master copies of government news releases and announcements distributed through the Alberta Communications Network (ACN). These news releases are the most complete set of major government announcements, making them a useful historical reference. Note: News releases after December 31, 2000, are maintained and scheduled in CD-rom format.

Date Range: 1972 to date

Media: Paper Electronic
Other:

Legal Reference:

FOIP Ref :

Closure Criteria: Calendar year end (Dec 31)	**Retention On-site:** 5 Year(s)	**Retention Off-site:** 3 Year(s)
Concurrence Conditions:	**Final Disposition:** Archives	

Archival Appraisal:
This item contains the most complete set available of Alberta Government news releases and announcements. It is the output of the Alberta Communications Network, whose primary duty is to distribute news releases, Orders-in-Council and major announcements for Government. The item should be retained for the Provincial Archives to document this key communications activity.

Items to be cancelled:

None

Reason for Amendment A001: This amendment removes the reference to "print" version of news releases and indexes for records scheduled after December 31, 2000.

COMMENTS

June 5, 2001. Approved with changes to Item 2.0: - Revise the title to ACN News Releases (Print) - Delete from the description "Includes both print and electronic versions." Diane Smith. March 14, 2003 - ACN News Releases are now available on the Government of Alberta website. The official records are being maintained in CD-rom media format instead of paper. Indexes to the paper copies are no longer being produced, making it difficult to search news releases in hard copy. Archives has agreed to accept the final disposition of news releases in CD-rom format. Therefore, this amendment removes references to "print" version of news releases and indexes that are scheduled after December 31, 2000.

12.
Records Alienation and Transfer

Introduction

As the government restructures, there are cases where records must be transferred from one department to another or alienated to non-government organizations. This chapter provides guidance on alienations and transfers.

Transfers from One Government Organization to Another

When you are transferring government records from one organization to another, the retention schedule for these records remains in effect. However, you must inform the Alberta Records Management Committee that a transfer will take place and indicate what retention schedules are affected. RSS has a transfer feature available for this transfer. Detailed instructions are documented in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual.*

Partial Transfers

Transferring only some of the items on an approved schedule to the jurisdiction of another government organization can also be done using RSS. RSS will move items from an approved schedule and create a new schedule with the same schedule information, archival appraisal and moved items as you indicated. The originally approved schedule will only contain the remaining items. Detailed instructions are documented in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual.*

Alienation of Government Records

Many government organizations are reorganizing the way they deliver services and are transferring this work to non-government bodies. This is referred to as *privatization* and can happen through the government offering the private sector the opportunity to move into the service field, the turning over of services to another level of government or non-profit organization or a combination of all these approaches.

When privatization occurs, records are transferred from the ownership, control and custody of the government organization to the non-government body. This is referred to as *alienation* from a records management perspective. This does not mean that a government organization necessarily backs out of these service delivery fields entirely. It may carry on an inspection or audit role, or undertake licencing and set standards of operation. However, the government organization's control over records transferred to or created in privatized service environment would likely be quite limited.

Privatization Agreement

A privatization of services should be governed by an agreement which, in turn, should deal substantively with the issues of freedom of information, protection of privacy and records management. A first step in considering these information law and management issues should be to carefully review what records it is essential to transfer in order to get a privatized service up and running. If this can be done without transferring records containing mandatory exceptions such as third party confidential business information or information harmful to personal privacy or information protected under the statute then there will be less difficulty in reaching an agreement between the new service provided and the government organization. Another option may be to copy records needed by the non-government body, if the amount and complexity of the records permit such an approach.

The Provincial Archives should perform an archival appraisal when a privatization agreement affecting records is being negotiated and may be involved to establish provisions for the preservation of archival records. Where records have permanent archival value, government organizations should retain ownership and provide them to the non-government body on a long term loan basis.

Components of Privatization Agreements

An agreement that governs a privatization of a service should:

- clearly establish those very limited types of records or functions over which the government organization will maintain control and extinguish control over all other types of records created by the privatized service in the future;
- Alberta Records Management Committee which governs the transfer of records to the privatized authority, and which *may:*
  - establish retention periods for these records;
  - provide that no disposal of these records may take place without the written approval of the public body; and

  - provide that disposition of records indicated for permanent retention will be either to the Provincial Archives of Alberta or destruction.

- indicate the nature of the limited control which the government may retain over all records transferred to the privatized service and the basis of ownership and control of future records and public access to information;

- establish any special privacy protection measures which the privatized service must take to protect personal information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure or data matching or linkage while it remains in its custody.

It should be noted that the transfer of responsibility for collecting, managing, using and disclosing personal information from a government to a privatized service can cause particular difficulties. This means that the personal information was originally collected, used and disclosed under conditions, which imposed statutory requirements on the public body to protect the privacy of the individuals involved with the service.

Any privatization of such services to the private sector or to any organization not covered by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Personal Information Protection Act*, or similar legislation at the federal level means that these protections are being taken away. This may lead to criticism from those individuals and the public generally.

Whenever possible, government organizations should negotiate a clause in the agreement where the new service provider undertakes to meet the privacy protection measures set out in *Part 2* of the *Act* or comparable measures such as the Canadian Standards Association *Code for the Protection of Personal Information*. It is most effective if this clause includes the opportunity for independent review either to the Information and Privacy Commissioner or to an industry ombudsman, during the period that the personal information is in active use.

APPENDIX 1 -
Scheduling Checklist

Introduction

Alberta Government Services has the statutory responsibility for administering the government-wide records management program under the Records Management Regulation.

Records provide evidence of business decisions, plans and actions, and a background and basis for future actions. They are necessary for demonstrating government accountability, protecting citizens' rights and preserving the documentary heritage of the province. The Records Management Regulation requires that records be disposed of only under the authority of Records Retention and Disposition Schedules approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC).

To assist ministries with the development of accurate, comprehensive and complete schedules, a database of all schedules has been established using an automated tool called the Records Scheduling System (RSS). Additional details are available in the *Records Scheduling System (RSS) Release 3.0 User Manual*.

On a continuing basis, the ARMC observes the quality of the schedule submissions from government organizations and reflects upon the guidance being provided. To continuously improve the quality of the submissions, this checklist has been developed to supplement the other publications. It provides:

- Guidance on the expectations of the ARMC related to the quality of schedule submissions; and
- A checklist to assist records management staff in reviewing schedules prior to their submission to ARMC.

ARMC Expectations

The quality expectations of the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC) are set at a high level. Schedules are legal documents and may be scrutinized during a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) review or investigation, or as part of a legal proceeding. As such, schedules must be clear, complete and accurate. They must also be written in such a manner as to enable Committee members to clearly understand the business functions, the records, the context and the rationale for recommendations. Good quality submissions will expedite the archival appraisal and the review and approval processes.

A number of draft schedules that were started before November 2000 under the old RSMS system are now coming forward for ARMC approval. The initial review done could have been done several years ago and since then, a number of things may have changed, including:

- Schedules may have been converted from RSMS into RSS, then through Release 2.0, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.0;
- Organizational changes may have occurred;
- Legislative changes (e.g. the Revised Statutes of Alberta) may have occurred; and
- ARMC expectations may have changed and further guidance may have been provided.

As such, after receiving a completed archival appraisal, and before submitting any draft schedule for ARMC review and approval, please review the schedule for the following points. If these points are not considered, the ARMC may defer approval of the schedule.

1. **ERRORS**. Read the schedule carefully and correct any typing and spelling errors.

2. **ORGANIZATION NAMES.**
   - Ensure the correct organization code is used.
   - Update old ministry names to the new ministry names if applicable.

3. **PURPOSE / FUNCTIONS; BRIEF HISTORY; MANDATE/LEGAL AUTHORITY; AND ITEM DESCRIPTION.** Format the text blocks by inserting editing features such as paragraph breaks to make the sections easier to read.

4. **CANCELLED SCHEDULES.** If the draft schedule cancels approved schedules in their entirety, ensure they are listed in the Related Schedules field. If specific items cancel items on approved schedules, list these old items under the specific new items in the "Items to be Cancelled" field.

5. **BLANK ITEMS.** If possible, eliminate "blank" items. Blank items are header items with sub-items having the detailed information regarding retention and disposition. If a blank item has an archival appraisal, the item should not be deleted.

6. **ITEM TITLES**.
   - Ensure the correct organization code is used.
   - Ensure item titles are formatted consistently throughout the schedule. Use of capitalization, hyphens, slashes and spaces should be consistent.

- Item titles should be able to stand on their own. Rather than titling an item "Copy", call it "Research Projects - Case Files - Copy Set". The title that was used to describe the master set should be repeated for the copy item.
- When referring to "Master" or "Copy", use the term "Master Set" or "Copy Set".
- Generic titles such as "Reports", "Training" or "Planning" should be qualified. For instance, "Stakeholder Consultation Reports", "Records Management Training" or "Market Development Planning".

7. **MEDIA.** The Media field has been moved to the item level. The media that were originally entered at the schedule level were duplicated for each item. Review and delete the media that are not applicable for every item.

8. **FOIP REFERENCES.** The *FOIP Act* has been revised. Ensure the correct sections are quoted. Web site: FOIP - Legislation

9. **LEGAL REFERENCES.** With the Revised Statutes of Alberta (RSA) 2000 some legal references have changed. Review and update as required.

10. **RETENTION PERIODS.**
    - Ensure retention periods are consistent with the *Limitations Act*. Discovery period is 2 years but people have 10 years to initiate legal actions. For items where there may be a likelihood of claims being brought against the government, the retention period should be 10 years.
    - For items that deal with environmental issues such as hazardous waste, discovery period may be 2 years but the retention period is 30 years.

11. **CONCURRENCE CONDITIONS.** If an item has a concurrence condition, ensure it actually is a condition that the SRO must check before the records series can go for final disposition such as "providing no outstanding litigation". In some cases, the text in this field provides instructions on how final disposition should be handled, such as: "recycle when no longer usable" [electronic media]; or "if animal destroy as a biohazard. If human, send to a grave or use for teaching purposes with permission".

NOTE: When modifying the schedule according to the eleven (11) points listed above, ensure that the content of the schedule and / or items are not changed to the extent where the completed archival appraisal is no longer valid. Only existing information should be updated. No "new" information should be added. If major revisions to the schedule are required, consult with the Secretary of the ARMC.

The Checklist

The Checklist provides a step-by-step guide to arranging and documenting the information required for a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. An assumption is made that all the preliminary steps including information gathering have been completed and the next step is creating the draft schedule in RSS (Records Scheduling System).

The Checklist is divided into two sections: Schedule Level Information and Item Level Information. The Checklist prompts the schedule creator with questions and / or provides instructions on how to complete each field on the records schedule. It also provides a cross-reference to the directions contained in this publication and a cross-reference to the data entry fields of the Records Scheduling System (RSS) software.

A. Schedule Level Information

#	Checklist Item
1.	Are you creating a new schedule or creating an amendment to an approved schedule? **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** None **RSS Fields:** CREATE SCHEDULE
2.	What is the name of the program or service area whose records you are scheduling? Does this name clearly identify the program or service area? The organization unit name is generally not a program or service area name. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, Researching Programs and Services **RSS Field:** PROGRAM / SERVICE
3.	Will you use this schedule once or more than once to transfer or dispose of records? Does this program have an end date? If the end date is in the future, the schedule would be considered a continuing schedule with a specific end date. Include this information in the Brief History field. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 8, Developing One-Time Schedules **RSS Fields:** SCHEDULE TYPE:

#	Checklist Item
4.	Is this schedule: - a new schedule or - an alienation? If the schedule is an alienation, be sure to provide the alienation agreement in its entirety or the section of it that describes how the records are to be handled. Ask the Provincial Archives to do an Archival Appraisal to determine if there are any records of enduring value that they wish to retain. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 1, see section "Records Retention and Disposition Schedules" Chapter 13, Records Alienation and Transfer Chapter 7, Developing an Operational Schedule **RSS Fields:** SCHEDULE CATEGORY:
5.	Is the correct organization code used? Is there more than one organization that will be using this schedule to transfer and dispose of records? If so, which one of these is the primary organization that will be responsible for maintaining the schedule and making any amendments? The other organizations can be added to the organization list and will be able to use the schedule for their records. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** None **RSS Field:** ORGANIZATION

#	Checklist Item
6.	Provide a brief description of the purpose of this program or service area. You should list some of the functions as well. Any special concerns should also be identified in this area, such as: reason for amendments, explanations of schedule relationships, reason for one-time schedule issuance, and details on schedule cancellations (i.e. details on items that remain on the old cancelled schedule). The purpose of this information is to provide the ARMC and other people reading this schedule with a clear understanding of the business, types of functions carried out and how the functions relate to each other. FOR EXAMPLE: The Tire Recycling Management Association has been delegated responsibility to administer the Tire Recycling Management Fund and to establish and administer a scrap tire waste minimization and recycling program for Alberta in accordance with sound environmental principles. Core Businesses: • Management of Scrap Tires - Develop efficient, effective, economic and environmentally sound solutions to deal with Alberta's scrap tires. • Scrap Tire recycling Program - Provide funding to the scrap tire processing and recycling industry for scrap tire material processed and used in an environmentally acceptable manner. • Administer the Tire Recycling Management Fund - Effectively manage resources to fulfill the Tire Recycling Management Association of Alberta's mandate. Remember, staff reviewing/approving this schedule may not have detailed knowledge of the program or service area. You need to provide this information so that they can make their decisions. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Researching Programs and Services" **RSS Field:** PURPOSE / FUNCTION

#	**Checklist Item**
7.	Provide a brief history of this program or service area. You should identify if this area was transferred from another department; if it is still operational or has it been terminated; date the program started and ended; any relationship with federal, municipal or other provincial governments, and any additional information that would help in understanding the schedule. It would be useful to explain why you are submitting the schedule. For instance, this one-time schedule has been created to dispose of information found in the basement. Other reasons to submit a schedule are because the program area changed, or a new program has arisen. FOR EXAMPLE: The Tire Recycling Management Association of Alberta ("that Association") was incorporated under the *Societies Act* of the Province of Alberta on October 3, 1996. As a not-for-profit organization, no provision for corporate income taxes has been provided in these financial statements pursuant to section 149(1)(1) of the *Income Tax Act*. The Tire Recycling Management Association (TRMA) is a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO), one of the new forms of governance being used by the Government of Alberta to allow industry & stakeholders to be accountable for environmental stewardship initiatives. The TRMA is responsible for fulfilling the following legislative mandate. Remember people reviewing/approving this schedule may not have detailed knowledge of the program and service area. You need to provide this information. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Researching Programs and Services" **RSS Field:** BRIEF HISTORY
8.	What legislation establishes the mandate of this program or service? List the citation numbers as well as the name of the act or regulation. If there are specific sections of the legislation that relate directly to the records being scheduled, providing the relationship would be useful to people reading the schedule. FOR EXAMPLE: *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act* (RSA 2000 c-38) FOR EXAMPLE: The *Environmental Protection & Enhancement Act* - Part 9. The Tire Recycling Management Regulation (Alta. Reg. #206/96) establishes the TRMA & provides authority to levy a $4.00 Advance Disposal Surcharge on sale of new tires. Tire Recycling Management Association Bylaws & *Societies Act*. *Income Tax Act*. Section 149(1)(1). **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Conducting Legal Research" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying and Documenting Legal References" **RSS Field:** LEGAL/MANDATE

#	**Checklist Item**
9.	Does this new schedule replace or cancel any previously approved schedules in its entirety? If so, enter the previously approved schedules in the Related Schedules portion. Are there any inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre under the previously approved schedules? If so, will they be following the new schedule or continue on the previously approved schedules? • If the new schedule is replacing a previously approved schedule and any inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre will follow the new items, the item relationship needs to be documented as well. These items should be documented in the Items Relationship field of each item on the new schedule. See ITEM LEVEL INFORMATION # 13. • If the new schedule is replacing a previously approved schedule BUT any inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre will continue to follow the previously approved schedules, item relationships do not need to be documented. When the new schedule is approved, the status of the previously approved schedules will be changed Expired because of the inactive records. Once the inactive records have gone through final disposition, the schedule status will be changed to Canceled. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Reviewing Existing Records and Information Systems" **RSS Field:** RELATED SCHEDULES …is superseded by (new schedule)

#	Checklist Item
10.	Does this schedule replace or cancel some of the items on a previously approved schedule with the rest of the items on the previously approved schedule remaining active? If so, enter the previously approved schedules in the Related Schedules portion. Are there any inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre under the specific items on the previously approved schedules? If so, will they be following the new schedule or continue on the previously approved schedules? • If the new schedule is replacing the items on the previously approved schedule and any inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre will follow the new items, the item relationship needs to be documented. These items should be documented in the Items Relationship field of each item on the new schedule. See ITEM LEVEL INFORMATION # 13. • If the inactive records stored at the Alberta Records Centre will continue to follow the previously approved schedules, item relationships do not need to be documented in the new schedule. When the new schedule is approved, an amendment will need to be made to the previously approved schedules. The items that have been superseded by the new schedule will have to be amended and end dates will be added to the date range. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules**: Chapter 4, see section "Reviewing Existing Records and Information Systems" **RSS Field:** RELATED SCHEDULES …is related to (new schedule)
11.	Are there any previously approved schedules that have related records series and may help to understand this schedule? If so, list the schedules. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Reviewing Existing Records and Information Systems" **RSS Field:** RELATED SCHEDULES … is related to (new schedule)

#	Checklist Item
12.	Do you have an organization chart for the area you are scheduling? The organization chart is required by the Provincial Archives for their completion of the Archival Appraisal. Tip: make sure it is current and does not include sensitive personal information (e.g. position or employee numbers). The electronic version can be attached to the schedule. A paper version can be scanned and attached. Are there any other documents that should be attached such as a legal opinion, FOIP opinion, or portions of an annual report that would be of value to the ARMC? **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** None **RSS Fields:** EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

#	Checklist Item
13.	Is there a need to support, justify or clarify a proposed retention period or final disposition, or to interpret the effect of the *FOIP Act* on some of the records series? Do any of the records series deal with aboriginal issues? If so, you should obtain a legal opinion. Do any records series in this schedule have any financial implications that require explanation or clarification by a financial officer? Are there any financial agreements between your organization and other organizations such as municipalities, federal government or other provincial jurisdictions? If so, you should obtain a financial opinion. Do any records series deal with personal information or are personal information banks? Do they contain confidential government information? Do these records deal with aboriginal people and document how they were treated? **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 7, see section "Assessing the Value of Records" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying and Documenting Legal References" **RSS Fields:** SELECT ACTIONS Request Feedback: Opinions • Legal • Financial • FOIP • Aboriginal

B. Item Level Information

#	Checklist Item
1.	Will the items numbers be a straight sequential number starting at 01 or will you be using the primary numbers from your classification structure? Item numbers should be strictly numeric. Be sure to zero fill your numbers. Decimal numbers can be used when defining related sub-items. If using decimal numbers, start with ".1" i.e. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. Do not start with ".0". Remember, there should be no "blank items" which are items that provide description information but do not have retention and final disposition information. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 7, Developing an Operational Records Schedule **RSS Field:** ITEM ID
2.	What is the name of the records series? The item should be able to stand on its own and the title should be descriptive enough to give a sense of what the records series could be. The item name should include the program name if possible. FOR EXAMPLE: COURT ADMINISTRATION - WRITS OF EXECUTION FILES Is this item the master set or the copy set for this records series? Add the appropriate text at the end of the title - Master Set or Copy Set. FOR EXAMPLE: Court Operations - Appointments/Authorities - Master Set Item titles can either be capitalized or not but whatever format is used, it should be consistent throughout the schedule. This also applies to the use of special characters such as hyphens. Is the hyphen separated from the other words by a space or is the space removed? However it is formatted, it should be formatted the same way throughout the schedule. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Conducting the Records Series Inventory" Chapter 5, Identifying and Categorizing Records Series Chapter 7, Developing an Operational Records Schedule Chapter 7, see section "Developing Records Series Descriptors" Chapter 7, see section "Master/Copy/Duplicate Relationships" **RSS Field:** TITLE

#	**Checklist Item**
3.	Provide a brief description of the records that will help to understand what these records are and how they are used. Information that should be included: • purpose of these records, • type of documents that could be found, • whether it is a case file series, • work flow (how the records are used), • relationship to other items, • relationship to other media types, and • any other related information such as Concurrence Conditions details. FOR EXAMPLE: Statistical reports reflecting current usage; e.g. current applicants, monthly volumes, breakdown of benefits distribution, etc. These are done annually (as in a rollup for the year) or during the year (e.g. for a range of months). The latter type of reports are often used to substantiate more dollars for the program; e.g. when program hits a "spike" period re volumes. FOR EXAMPLE: This series of records documents the Division's recommendations for the general best practice methods to meet the needs of industry. Some of the standards have legislation as their base while others are recommendations made by the Division therefore there is no provision for legal interference in noncompliance issues. Records may contain final documents, correspondence, and other related records. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules**: Chapter 4, see section "Purpose of the Records Series Inventory" Chapter 5, Identifying and Categorizing Records Series Chapter 7, see section "Developing Records Series Descriptors" **RSS Field:** DESCRIPTION
4.	What is the date range for these records? One-time schedules should have end dates. End dates can also be included for programs that will be ending in the future. Remember that if a program is scheduled to be terminated on March 31, 2004, records will be created after the termination date related to program wrap up. Final reports, statistics and audit records are normally created at this time. It is recommended that one year be added to the termination date for active programs that will be ending at a specific date in the future. This may eliminate the need for minor amendments to the date range. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Completing the Records Series Inventory" Chapter 8, see section "Characteristics of One-Time Schedules" **RSS Field:** DATE RANGE

#	**Checklist Item**
5.	In what format are these records? Are they paper, electronic, microfilm or other? Identify each format on the schedule. Depending on how they are used and their business value, each format may need to be described as separate sub-items because of differing retention or final dispositions. Be sure the relationship between the media types is documented in the items description. For electronic database records, be sure to include: • the backup media, • the application system that generated the electronic records, • input documents, • any reports generated by the application system, • migration strategy to ensure records created today will be accessible in the future as required. You may find that the electronic database records do not have all of the above. If this is the case, you should explain. e.g. “Data is entered into the system from the application form which is placed on the client file.” **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section “Conducting a Records Series Inventory” Chapter 5, Identifying and Categorizing Records Chapter 7, see section “Multiple Media” **RSS Field:** MEDIA

#	Checklist Item
6.	Is there any legislation in place that indicates how long a records series must be kept or dictates the final disposition of these records? If so, enter the appropriate code in the Legal Reference field and provide details in the Records Series Description field. e.g. ACT - The *Child Welfare Act* states that the child case file must be kept for 100 years. Does the *Limitations Act* have an effect the records series? The *Limitations Act*, which came into force in 2000, has extended most limitation of action to 10 years. Check to see if this records series fall under the Act. If so, the retention period of these records will have to be ten years. Does the schedule deal with environmental issues such as hazardous waste? If so, the discovery period may be 2 years but the retention period is 30 years. The *FOIP Act* states that records used to make a decision for rejecting the provision of a service to an individual must be kept for one year. Do these records include applications for a benefit program? **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Researching Programs and Services" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying and Documenting Legal References" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying FOIP References" **RSS Field:** LEGAL REFERENCE
7.	Is this records series a Personal Information Bank (PIB)? Does it contain information that is routinely disclosed? Do any of the FOIP exceptions to disclosure apply to this records series? Does the Paramountcy Section 5(2) apply to these records? Provide details as required. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "FOIP Considerations" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying FOIP References" Chapter 7, see section "Identifying and Documenting Legal References" **RSS Field:** FOIP REFERENCE

#	**Checklist Item**
8.	How do you know when a record series is closed? If you use S/O, you may need to define what determines when the records series is superseded or obsolete. E.g. "S/O means when the executive director has given their approval to close the file". Is there an event or special condition that must occur before a record can be considered closed? E.g. "After the final audit is completed" or "Calendar Year once all the grant requirements have been met". On one-time schedules, the closure criteria for all the items will be blank because all the records should already be closed. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 8, see section "Determining Closure Criteria, Retention Periods and Final Disposition" **RSS Fields:** CLOSURE CRITERIA • Fiscal Year • Calendar Year • Superceded / Obsolete CLOSURE CRITERIA NOTE
9.	How long do the records have to be stored in the semi-active storage in the organization after they have been closed? If the records have a low reference rate and need to be kept for longer than one year, they can be stored at the Alberta Records Centre. Conditional Retention can be used for records that have a very long active life and a low retrieval rate such as land titles, bridge construction and building blue prints. Because of the volume of these types of records and the cost of office space, some of the older records could be stored in inactive storage. Use the item description field to describe the records and what event will make them inactive. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 8, see section "Determining Closure Criteria, Retention Periods and Final Disposition" Chapter 4. see section "Retention and Disposition Questions" **RSS Field:** ON-SITE RETENTION

#	**Checklist Item**
10.	How long do the records have to be stored at the Alberta Records Centre after they have completed their retention in the organization? As a rule, the Alberta Records Centre stores the masters. This facility should not be used to store both masters and copies. If you wish to use the facility to store copies, you should provide your rationale. The Retention in the Org and ARC should equal the total retention period for the records series. Conditional Retention can be used for records that have a very long active life and a low retrieval rate such as land titles, bridge construction and building blue prints. Because of the volume of these types of records, some of the older records could be stored at the Alberta Records Centre. Use the item description field to describe the records and what event will make them inactive. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 4, see section "Retention and Disposition Questions" Chapter 8, see section "Determining Closure Criteria, Retention Periods, and Final Disposition" **RSS Field:** OFF-SITE RETENTION
11.	After completion of the retention period, are there any conditions that have to be checked before the records can be disposed of? Are these types of records common to litigation? Common concurrence conditions are: providing no outstanding litigation; once microfilm has been verified; etc. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** None **RSS Field:** CONCURRENCE CONDITION

#	Checklist Item
12.	How are the records to be disposed of after the total retention period has been met and concurrence has been obtained? The Provincial Archives of Alberta will conduct an archival appraisal and may change the final disposition in accordance with their mandate. If you or your users have a concern with the final disposition that the archivist has selected, you should discuss it with the archivist. The Archival Appraisal must be included with your final submission to the ARMC. There are three valid final dispositions: Archives, Destroy and Transfer. Transfer is used for alienation schedules. **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** Chapter 8, see section "Determining Closure Criteria, Retention Periods, and Final Disposition" **RSS Field:** FINAL DISPOSITION
13.	Is this new item going to cancel any items on previously approved schedules? If so, enter the schedule number(s) and item(s) that will be cancelled once this schedule is approved. If the entire previously approved schedule is to be cancelled, be sure to enter the approved schedule number in the Related Schedule field as being superseded by this new schedule. (See SCHEDULE LEVEL INFORMATION # 9.) If some of the items on a previously approved schedule will be cancelled and the remaining items will continue to be active on the previously approved schedule, be sure to enter the approved schedule number in the Related Schedule field as being related to this new schedule. (See SCHEDULE LEVEL INFORMATION # 10.) **Developing Quality Records Retention and Disposition Schedules:** None **RSS Field:** ITEM RELATIONSHIPS